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News from behind the

IRON CURTAIN

July 1955

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Vol. 4 No. 7

FEATURES

- Hungarian Party Agitation
- Soviet Trade Offensive: West Europe II
- Movies for the Masses
- The House of Culture
- Three Polish Poems



News from behind the IRON CURTAIN

July 1955 — Vol. 4 — No. 7

Free Europe Committee, Inc.

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ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION . . .

NEWS FROM BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN, published monthly by the Free Europe Press of the Free Europe Committee, Inc., is addressed to those with a specific interest in events and developments in Communist-dominated Europe. This publication is sold, by subscription at an annual rate of \$3.00, to representatives of the press and other media, to universities, churches, libraries, and research centers, and to other groups of citizens, as well as to individuals who are interested in a serious, fully-documented account of "Communism-in-action." The Committee believes that accurate information contributes to an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of Communism, and hence to the ability of the free nations to combat this system.

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The Month in Review



AS IF IN response to a law of equal but opposite reactions, the Soviet bloc continued to relax external policies while hardening internal ones. The penitential visit of Soviet leaders to Yugoslavia and the Soviet attempt to write off the six years of vilification and enmity as "mistakes" induced by the traitorous Beria were one culmination of the post-Stalin relaxation in foreign policy. Western observers thought the Yugoslav rapprochement might have profound significance apart from immediate political causes and commitments. It is Moscow's first public admission that independent Communist development is possible, that ideological difference is not heretical, that dogmatic and absolute Soviet domination is not the only alternative to the dustbin of history. The acceptance of these points, together with the principle of non-interference in Yugoslav internal affairs, by the top Soviet leaders is not merely a loss of face, a backtracking; it is a defeat which may have important repercussions throughout the Satellites, where the Soviet Union cannot afford a similar retreat if it is to maintain its position of dominance and control.

The immediate political purposes of the Soviet visit to Yugoslavia were part of a broader Communist reaction to the threat of West German rearmament. Presumably this response called for a belt of "neutralized" countries across Central Europe, ostensibly to include both Austria and Yugoslavia, thus splitting Yugoslavia from its Balkan Pact allies, Turkey and Greece. In this last regard, it is possible that the USSR had, in its negotiations with Tito, revived the old Dimitrov plan for a Balkan Federation centered on Belgrade, but as yet no evidence is available.

There was some Western speculation that the Satellites might be included in the "neutralized" belt, but in the Satellites themselves press and radio made it very clear that such a prospect is presently not being admitted. Regime sources were careful to stress that the only alternative to continuation of the *status quo* in the Satellites—complete Soviet domination—was a return to the *status quo ante* under "American imperialist domination." Satellite references to the issue were couched in the most violent terms: "the restoration of old regimes . . . the abolition of rights and liberties . . . criminals . . . machine guns."

The failure of Soviet policy to break up the Western alliance, and particularly to isolate the United States, combined with Communist bloc internal and chronic crises, in all probability explains why Communist policy in Europe (and Europe has for the time being become the center of the stage) has recently become more "conciliatory" in tactic. With the signing of the Austrian treaty, the invitation by the USSR to West Germany's Chancellor Adenauer, a series of disarmament proposals, the agreement to take part in two four-power meetings (one "at the summit" and one of Foreign Ministers), and the Bulganin-Khrushchev visit to Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union seems still to be directing it-

self toward its prime target on the continent: Germany. It may be the Soviet position that Satellite "neutralization" is out of the question, but it is also possible that the adamant propaganda position is one way of maneuvering for a bargain on Germany. Concessions on such a seemingly "unyieldable" point might be used to demand important concessions in return. However, the likelihood that the Communists would accept Western demands for rolling up the Iron Curtain, free elections, and the host of other democratic guarantees necessary for a genuine "neutralized" belt seems small.

The stiffening pressures within the Soviet orbit are the Communist response to the necessities of maintaining control in face of the failures and dangers of the first New Course period. This reaction is most apparent in Hungary, where industrial work norms are probably about to be raised and where a campaign has been mounted to tighten Party discipline and strict obedience to Party hierarchy. Agriculture continues to receive the greatest remedial attention, and the regime announced its intention of making the collectivized area predominant by the end of 1960. This could be accomplished by doubling the area and farmers in kolkhozes, a program in sharp contrast to decollectivizations under Nagy, but not by any means intensive "Stalinist" collectivization. This month's Party resolution dealing with agricultural problems was moderate in tone, even hesitant, a tone characteristic of the March anti-Nagy resolution which has continued in subsequent "middle road" pronouncements.

After Hungary, Czechoslovakia was the country where New Course kolkhoz dissolutions went farthest, and Czechoslovakia is now apparently following Hungary in resuming collectivization, although statements to that effect have been less clear in intent and more indefinite in time schedule than in Hungary.

Agriculture continued to receive attention in Bulgaria as well. Here the major problem was not an increase of collectivization (Bulgaria is by far the most collectivized Satellite) but rather the harmful effects of multiplying bureaucratic controls. This month the amount of minute bureaucratic supervision was, at least in decree, sharply reduced. Although local State agencies and Ministries still maintain firm supervision of overall farm planning, collective and individual farms alike are now permitted to cultivate crops of their choice, subject to compulsory delivery quotas.

In Hungary, Nagy's withdrawal from public life continued with his "resignation" from the Patriotic People's Front. One of the March Resolution's complaints was that Nagy permitted the PPF to assume too much independence of Party control. The regime is now emphasizing that such independence from the Party is impossible. The problem of the PPF's future is probably to be clarified at the PPF National Council meeting scheduled for the end of June. Since the PPF was the New Course instrument of greatest "right deviation," a recasting of its character is necessary if it is to continue to play a part in the current program.

The Hungarian Communist Youth League, DISZ, is also undergoing a process of reevaluation in light of the March Resolution. A DISZ Congress, scheduled for the middle of June, was probably called to permit announcement of the necessary restructuring and indicates the continuing trouble the Communists have not only with mass organizations, but with youth as a whole.

Hungarian Party: Propaganda, Education and Agitation

COMMUNISTS have long looked upon themselves as a monolithic elite of professional revolutionaries leading the masses to a future utopia. To do so the Communist Parties have had to provide an active leadership—through propagandists, educators and agitators—to persuade, motivate and activate the “inert” or resisting masses, for even in the most totalitarian societies the limitations of force are obvious, and force cannot and need not be used explicitly in a large majority of cases. To a large extent the core of the Communist system is based directly on the efficiency of this “persuasion” network, the quality of its members, their immediate availability, their thorough knowledge of and capacity to carry through what is expected of them by the top Party leadership.

To create and maintain such a network has been one of the imperatives of Communist power, and two basic problems are thereby posed: one is to make the cadres reliable and responsible to the top leadership; and the second is to make them effective with the masses. The two are frequently irreconcilable, and often further complicated by top leadership indecision or confusion.

The propagandists, educators and agitators have been one of the most troublesome cadre problems the Communists have had to face in recent times. Since, essentially, they have been trained in a rigid and dogmatic fashion, radical departures from doctrine have not only undermined their ability to function in practical terms, but have also undermined their most valuable driving force: their *esprit*, based on a conviction of their rightness (the infallibility of the Party), and of the historical inevitability of Communist success (Marxist optimism).

In Hungary particularly, recent events have called for a bureaucracy capable of swinging from the unyielding rigidity, grandiose ambition, and theoretical commitment of the Stalinist period to the flexibility, pragmatism and relative permissiveness of the New Course, and then back



Kolkhoz President: "Anyone got any objections? Go ahead, comrades, criticize!"

Ludas Matyi (Budapest), December 9, 1954

to a point between the two after the March Central Committee Resolution. The attempt so far is a debacle, largely because the Party vanguard was psychologically and organizationally unable to cope with the new situation. Deprived of its dogmatic self-assurance, restricted in its use of administrative pressures and force, and confronted by the hatred of the people, the Party lost much of its control over the country and over itself.

The reasons for this debacle are best seen by examining both the training program of cadres and their actual operation in the political and economic circumstances of the past few years.

The Communist *agitprop* program has a huge apparatus, with cadres everywhere—in homes and factories, in schools and mass organizations, in villages, collective farms, and all the ramifications of State organization. Work is largely performed by various cadre divisions concerned with selecting Party militants. Three main groups of such cadres operate at different levels of administration. The top cadres are made up of and deal with such persons as Secretaries of Party organizations and other outstanding Communist leaders. The middle cadre echelons comprise and direct Secretaries and leaders of basic Party organizations, while the lowest order is concerned with the basic organizations themselves. Thus, as in an army, cadre staff officers are to be found in all Party echelons, but no matter how “low” their rank, their task is vital for it is they who draw up battle plans, shift and reassign Party officers, and build up a manpower reserve.

In the original phase of Party organization, plants, offices and other centers received their cadre replacements from Central Party Headquarters, where a Cadre Division, working closely with the Party Central Committee, kept all records of qualified members. The arrangement, however, proved unsatisfactory and on March 20, 1952, radical

changes were introduced in the training and selection of members. Both the Cadre Division within the Central Committee and the office of Cadre Secretary were abolished. As of August 1, 1952, cadre divisions—or, in smaller units, a section dealing with cadre problems—were established in all Party organizations. As a result of this decentralization, a one-man leadership of local Party cadre agencies was created, and the selection of propagandists, People's educators and agitators became the prerogative of the appointed functionaries who controlled the new divisions.

Education

The educational training of Party militants is essentially not an academic program, but rather a conditioning process which enables the graduating "student" to adjust himself to and interpret for others every conceivable twist in Party policies. It is true that such nominally academic subjects as "Marxism-Leninism" are taught, and it is also true that a number of theoretical principles are "explained"; in the main, however, such "theory" equips the student with jargon rather than ideas, with a generalized attitude rather than a coherent set of philosophical convictions. Clarity and coherence are stressed principally with reference to the past, to the decadent, reactionary, exploiting, capitalist-fascist regime that preceded "liberation." As for the future, it is only the distant future that is made explicit, the time when the new Communist man will finally live in a new, Communist society. With respect to the present the novice learns that what the Party does is not only right but predetermined.

Party members chosen to spread the Party's gospel are made to attend courses varying in length, content and intensity, depending on the candidate's academic background and political "maturity," as well as the role he is meant to assume upon graduation. Party members are also guided and enlightened by a number of agencies set up by the regime to reinforce formal political education.

The problem of an enlarged and coordinated indoctrination system for the elite was discussed by the Party's Political Committee on October 20, 1949. It was then decided that, in addition to the Central Committee's Education Section, a Central Lecture Bureau should be organized. As a result, such offices were set up by the Greater Budapest Party Committee and all County Party Committees and entrusted with offering advice and guidance in "theoretical" problems to both activists and pupils.

A regular column dealing with theoretical questions was also inaugurated at that time. Both the daily *Szabad Nep* and the monthly *Tarsadalmi Szemle* (Social Review) began running such a column, the former featuring a special section in which questions on theory and ideology raised by "readers" were authoritatively answered. Finally, it was also decided that study of the Russian language was to be compulsory for all leading cadre members.

This concerted effort resulted in the following steady increase in the percentage of Party members who entered Party schools (dates refer to school years): 1950-51: 30

percent of the membership (*Szabad Nep*, May 25, 1951); 1951-52: 40 percent of the membership (*Partepites* [Budapest], June 1951); 1952-53: 50 percent of the membership (*For a Lasting Peace* [Bucharest], September 21, 1952); 1953-54: 55 percent of the membership (*Szabad Nep* [Budapest], June 13, 1954); 1954-55: 55 percent of the membership (*Szabad Nep*, August 12, 1954).

It is significant that, in the same period, the size of the Party remained fairly constant, so that what the leadership sought to achieve was mainly an improvement in cadre quality. According to *Szabad Nep* of February 26, 1951, there were, at that time, 862,114 Party members and candidates. In May 1954, according to the same paper of May 25, 1954, the corresponding tally stood at 864,607.

In addition to Party members, approximately 150,000 non-Party persons attend the lower echelons of Party schools, and the central Lecturers' Bureau is charged with the education of the Hungarian Youth League, including its *Petofi* education Circles attended by some 250,000 youths. Altogether, therefore, the Party has organized the systematic indoctrination of over 800,000 persons at any one time.

Schools

The most elementary political course is one that lasts nine months and offers basic knowledge to both Party and non-Party persons with only a rudimentary formal education. Students are taught the Statutes of the Communist Party, they are made to memorize biographies of leading Soviet and Hungarian regime figures, and they are introduced to the simplest principles governing a planned economy. Next, on a somewhat higher level, are the "Political Schools" offering two-year courses, again to both Party members and outsiders. Students are made to "understand" Party policies, and practical "principles" of "socialism" are explained. Some 100,000 persons are enrolled in the first year's course; these are people who have a grasp of elementary political problems, but are judged incapable of pursuing their studies by themselves. Second year classes, called Medium Grade Political School, admit students only if they have successfully completed the Elementary Political School course.

The next step up the ladder of the Party's academic indoctrination is reserved for Party members only. Communists who have completed courses at the Medium Grade Political School are sent to what is known as "Cadre Training Courses." Approximately 60 to 80,000 persons are admitted every year, and the main subject taught is political economy.

Real graduation, however, occurs only when the student is deemed capable of tackling the approved works of Marx and Lenin on his own. Such students study under the guidance of the Budapest or County Party Committees, and their efforts are coordinated with regular attendance at Party propaganda lectures. Their curriculum includes a study of the history of the Bolshevik Revolution, Political Economy, Agrarian Policy, and "philosophy."

Besides these so-called "independent" academic centers, the Party has also organized a network of Party schools



Caption: "What's the bell for?" "It's for the boss. He lives in the city, 20 kilometers away from the MTS."

Krokodil (Moscow), January 30, 1955

for Communists who cannot attend the regular political schools or have been chosen to specialize in a particular phase of Party work. These Party schools straddle the whole country and they are of particular importance in rural areas, since the regular political schools are found mostly in cities.

The Party Academy is the highest level of Party education, and only the most privileged among Communists are allowed to follow its three-year courses, so that enrollment is limited to 200-500 students. Entrance requirements have been consistently raised and by now only high school graduates are entitled to apply for admittance. According to *Szabad Nep* of June 13, 1954, the last academic year featured the following subjects:

"Marxist-Leninist teachings on the bourgeois democratic revolution; the dictatorship of workers and peasants; the Hungarian Communists' struggle for the realization and consolidation of the proletarian dictatorship . . . the development of the cultural revolution; the patriotic education of the people. . . . The international situation after World War II. . . . The expansion of the international peace movement. . . . Marxist-Leninist teachings on socialist industrialization. . . . The development and socialist reorganization of agriculture. . . . The new phase in the development of our People's Democracy. . . . The economic consolidation of the worker-peasant alliance under the New Course. . . . The end of the excessive pace of industrialization. . . . The fight against right and left wing distortions in Party policy. . . . The guiding principles of the second Five Year Plan. . . . The independent People's Front, the most ex-

tensive social and political organization of our People's Democracy. . . . Tasks aimed at the consolidation of socialist legality and tightening of civic discipline. . . . Tasks connected with the development of ideological work. The proper selection and training of cadre members. . . . Party life as based on Party statutes. . . . The further expansion of the principle of collective leadership."

Thus, even in the very highest Party institute students chiefly learn how to understand the Party's immediate aims, and very little is said about the alleged "principles" that govern these policies. This year's curriculum is thus bound to be different from last year's, reflecting the tactical changes of the March Central Committee resolution.

Besides schools and courses dealing specifically with Party work and ideology, indoctrination is also carried out under disguised forms in regular academic training. High school students, for instance, are taught such subjects as history, economics and philosophy from a "Marxist" point of view. Starting in 1949, the university curriculum was revised to include a faculty of "Marxism-Leninism," with subjects compulsory for all students. Also, as far back as 1946, following a "recommendation" by the Communists, a so-called Russian Institute was organized in Budapest with the ostensible purpose of teaching high school students the Russian language and its literature. Soviet professors became members of the staff and, by 1952, the school was renamed the "Lenin Institute" and entrusted with two tasks: the training of Communist university lecturers and Party and State functionaries engaged in ideological work and the teaching of Russian to both teachers and translators. In 1954-55, a high-level graduate course was inaugurated to train people who have passed through the Party Academy and are slated to become top propagandists.

This description of the present status and content of Party indoctrination shows that the regime has gone to great lengths to accomplish two things: it has created an intricate system of formal Party education on all levels to train the Party faithful in dealing with all problems relating to maintenance of the Party's supremacy in all sectors of national life and, at the same time, it has established an indirect but nonetheless all-pervasive control over general education so as to create as fertile as possible a ground for the dissemination of the Party's ideas and the implementation of its policies.

Selection of Party Workers

Proper educational qualifications do not constitute the only criterion for the selection of candidates assigned sensitive Party work. Often the candidate's parents' and forefathers' position on the social scale determines whether or not he is to be admitted to the more important courses. Social background is even more important when, upon graduation, the records are carefully re-examined before the prospective Party worker is sent out on his assignment. A proletarian origin is of course the best recommendation, and almost indispensable for positions in the higher echelons. How this process favors persons of working-class backgrounds was shown in the following statistics in *Szabad Nep* of March 27, 1955:

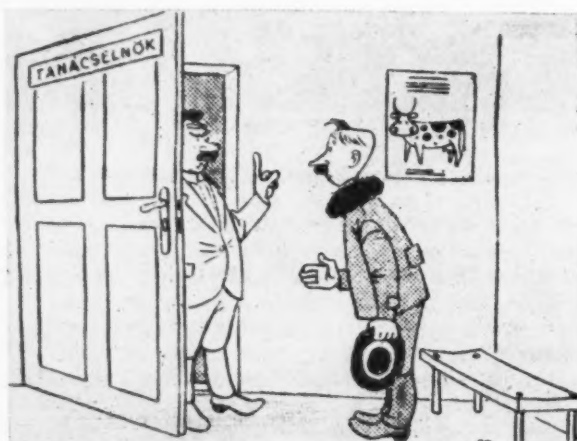
"According to a survey carried out in January 1954 in 20 large enterprises, eight ministries and three councils, of the 8,500 employees holding leading positions, 33.2 percent were workers before taking on their present functions, 41.2 percent were of worker origin, and 14.5 percent of peasant origin. The proportion of workers is highest at the top level. For instance, at the 20 enterprises, 47 percent of all executives and 75 percent of all directors were former laborers."

On May 10, 1953, Rakosi boasted that "during the past four years nearly a hundred thousand industrial workers and working peasants came to leading positions in plants and enterprises, State administration and officers' staff of the People's Army." These figures may be correct, but they say nothing about the bungling, arbitrariness and plain idiocy that, for many years, have marked the Party's efforts to solve the replacement problem. Taking advantage of the "frankness" permitted under the New Course, theoretician Jozsef Daczo in a work entitled *About the Selection and Education of Cadres* (Szikra, Budapest, April 1954), drew a devastating picture of what really happened. First, he scores inequities in the selection system:

"A grave error is that the selection work is not business-like and not planned well enough. . . . Leading positions are often given to people who are just smart and try to be conspicuous, and not to those who are educated and selected by Party organs. As a result, silent and reserved, but nevertheless talented, men are often overshadowed."

Another way to bar the way of "talented" men has been Rakosi's much vaunted indiscriminate promotion of thousands of Party members whose only qualification was that their origin was "safe":

"Excesses must be avoided in judging the past of our cadre members. . . . It has often happened in the past that honest comrades were treated as politically unreliable and



Title: He Has the Audacity To Object.

Caption: "Comrade Council President, I have been waiting for two hours!"

"Do you have that much time in the planting season?"

Ludas Matyi (Budapest), March 24, 1955

were dismissed from their jobs only because they had a distant relative in a capitalist country, or because a relative had returned from the West. . . . There has recently been an exaggerated tendency to search for relatives. Such . . . a search only serves to increase the unhealthy distrust that exists in many places. Such methods are incompatible with real Communist alertness. . . ."

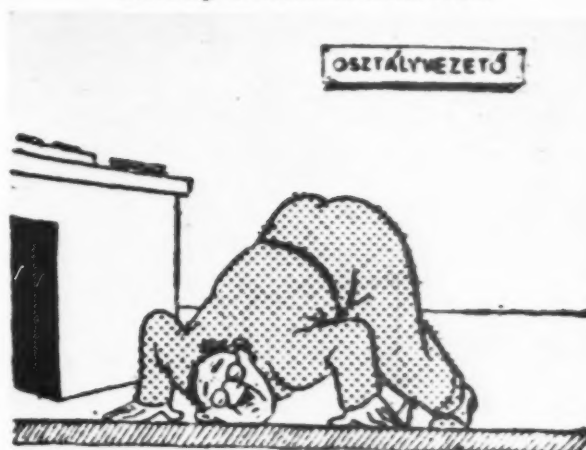
What the theoretician fails to say is that "such methods" were incompatible not with any fixed principle of Party policy, but merely with the demands of the moment. In the light of the March resolution it is interesting to note the following passage on what has now become known as "rightist deviation." Juxtaposition of the two extracts gives a clear picture of the present contradictions in Party orientation—a crude attempt to integrate some of the leniency of the New Course (with its refusal to harp on class origin) with the new vigilance (with its intensification of the class struggle):

"The enemy has not given up his fight against us and will continue in the future to do everything to worm his way into the ranks of the Party and obtain leading positions. . . . In Czegled, the Party Commission appointed a Party Secretary who later proved to be an enemy of the Soviet Union and openly slandered the Soviets. . . . The further along the road of Socialist building that we are, the more intense becomes our enemies' hatred for us; as their ranks shrink, they fight with increasing bitterness for every position. . . ."

It is the latter view that prevailed under Stalinism and the former under the New Course. Each policy, however, necessitates a different kind of organization and a different kind of bureaucrat. At the height of the class struggle, for instance, the cleavage between the Party and the rest of the population was an inevitable by-product of the harsh role assumed by the Party militants. Agitators ordered, and the people had to obey: the hierarchy's interest was mainly in results, not in the means used to obtain them. Over the years the Party therefore developed into an iron lever, small but compact, the efficiency of which depended upon its ability to control, and control ruthlessly, all prime loci of national power. Party militants were chosen primarily for their fanaticism, their complete subservience to the machine, and their readiness, if necessary, to work *against* the people. Then came the June 1953 resolution with its promises of political and economic relaxations, and the role of the Party changed almost overnight. Thus, for some 18 months, the Party faithful were instructed to work *with* the people, and even at times *for* the people. Moderation, and the ability to compromise and act independently were the qualities now looked for in Party agitators. The hierarchy, however, failed to take into account the corrosion that had set in under Stalinism. It is now clear that the "right" people were not available and that, through its concessions, the regime released long-suppressed popular pressures which the Party could not channel in the right direction.

Because the Party had isolated itself from the masses—thus restricting its own growth—the people were able to use the limited concessions to their own advantage, and the New Course assumed a "runaway" character unfore-

Listening to Criticism from Below



Inscription in upper picture reads "Department Chief."
Inscription in lower picture reads "Department."

Ludas Matyi (Budapest), March 17, 1955

seen by the regime. For instance, workers demanded, and succeeded in extracting from their factory bosses, additional wages that rapidly depleted reserve funds in many enterprises. The Party found itself powerless because, as a tiny minority, it could exert its strength only by the very method now denied it: crude force. Daczo paints the following picture of the cadre problem in industry:

"There are some big plants that cannot cover their own cadre needs. When the Matyas Rakosi Works were divided and two Party Committees had to be organized, the Party organization and the District Party Committee were unable to find two satisfactory Party secretaries among the many thousands of workers and engineers who were Party members. A Party secretary from somewhere else had to be brought in to head one of the Party Committees."

If the situation was critical among the industrial proletariat, where cadre replacement is comparatively easy, it was even worse among the peasants, where opposition to the system is strongest. The book reveals, for in-

stance, that in the community of Janoshaza there were only three peasants among 27 agitators. Despite this scarcity of available persons, in 1953 alone the District Party Committee of the Tolna County dismissed 118 basic unit secretaries for a variety of reasons. Daczo ruefully comments:

"This high number indicates that the selection of cadre members was not done carefully enough in the County. At times intolerance adds to the turnover. As a consequence of such mistakes, the Party Committee of the 'Gheorghiu-Dej' shipyards had five secretaries, three organizing secretaries and two *agitprop* secretaries in two years."

Many of the difficulties in finding the correct people and placing them in the right positions stem from over-centralization, an organizational weakness that persists despite repeated efforts at eliminating it. The setup is still paper-bound and impersonal, and therefore ill adapted to cope with unforeseen contingencies or to take into account differences among people, places and circumstances. Daczo finds it intolerable that "even after the July 1953 decisions," many Party functionaries are still being forced to live away from their families. He mentions many such unfortunate people, including a functionary of Gyor, who had been "separated from his family for four years." The author pleads for more "love and understanding" in handling the cadres and recommends that "Instead of being dismissed impatiently, they should be assisted in their work; leaders should be interested in the private lives, family and living conditions of the cadre members."

The latest official pronouncement on this subject was a March 25 plea by Central Committee Secretary Lajos Acs for "initiative from below" and decentralization in the selection procedure:

"The District Party Committee can make its leading and guiding role felt most effectively by organizing the education and watching the activities of all leading cadres of every Party organization in the district. . . . The authority of the District Party Committees must be expanded. An end must be put to the practice of State, social, county and central organizations placing Party members, non-Party workers, intellectuals and experts into leading positions in the districts or replacing others without previously informing the District Committee."

"Field Work"

The Party's will and policies are communicated to the people by three kinds of Party workers: propagandists, People's educators, and agitators (the latter also referred to as "activists"). Basically, the dissemination of Party doctrine falls into two main classifications—practical and theoretical, or agitation and propaganda. In his debate with the "Economists" at the beginning of the century, Lenin defined the terms as follows: "Propaganda gives many ideas to one or two persons; agitation, on the other hand, gives one or two ideas, but these it gives to the masses." After the Communists assumed power in the USSR and the Satellites, they were able to broaden considerably the concept of propaganda by controlling all

media of expression. It is still true, though, that propaganda is meant to cover as broad as possible a range of "ideas" while agitation is meant to concentrate on the main, concrete tasks at hand. From an organizational point of view, the two functions are sometimes combined in a single *agitprop* bureau, but the actual work is assigned to specialists who "reach" the people in different ways.

The propagandist does "basic" work. What he says sets the form and content of the agitator's task. The two, agitation and propaganda, thus rarely conflict for the latter precedes and determines the former. The subject matter of the propagandist is the fundamental problem of the Party in its "struggle to transform society and establish socialism." Books, pamphlets, magazines, daily papers, courses, seminars, films, plays and other written and visual material are all used in propaganda work.

As directed toward Party members and fellow-travellers, the object of propaganda is mainly educational—in Communist jargon, "to raise the ideological-political standard" of cadres in State administration and economic life. As directed toward non-Party people, propaganda is designed to arouse their enthusiasm for the regime's programs, neutralize or intimidate opposition, and generally create the "correct" intellectual and emotional climate.

Unlike propagandists, whose relations with the people are indirect, agitators and People's educators perform the greater part of their work through personal contact with their "constituents." They perform their duties through house-to-house agitation work, short meetings, radio listening circles, special *Szabad Nep* reading circles, *Szabad Fold* (the farm sector paper) winter evenings, parents' school meetings, village library meetings, in houses of culture in towns and villages, in plants and in the fields.

People's educators and agitators thus try to meet people wherever they can, but the educators carry out their tasks mainly by person-to-person interviews, while agitators operate mostly among small groups. The nature of their work is very similar though, in general, that of the educator precedes the agitator's and lays the foundations for his activities. Subjects discussed encompass the whole of national life, with particular stress on problems requiring immediate solutions. The talks refer to these "problems" both directly (for instance, enjoining peasants to enlist in collectives) and indirectly (by extolling the advantages of large-scale farming, mechanization, mutual help, etc.). Topics covered include discussion of the meaning and intent of the Plans, an explanation of the "leading role" of the Soviet Union, the exposure of such concepts as "Western imperialism," chauvinism, "Social Democratism," clericalism, syndicalism and various "deviations," and a review of production problems, inventions, rejects, the cost of living, seasonal work—everything that needs change, improvement or reorientation.

A typical agitation meeting in the countryside will probably start with the agitator's violent attack on all things of the past: the landless peasantry, large estates, greedy landlords, etc. This is the easy part of the talk. The agitator is ideologically on safe ground and he can exploit for

his own use real or invented inequities under the old regime. The dark past is thus brought into contrast with the alleged improvements of the present and the illimitable promises of the future. The agitator might even admit that thus far not everything has gone smoothly, but he will be quick to add that this is only natural, an accursed inheritance of the wicked past. He will stress that one should not be too fussy over present difficulties (that may be the core of the agitation—to counteract discontent, apathy and resistance), and he will point out that everything cannot be done at once and that, in any case, it is more important to concentrate on the concrete tasks of the moment. If he then senses that his audience is not convinced, he stuns his listeners by quoting a number of statistics: 3.5 million cadastral acres were distributed as part of the land reform; thousands of tractors are being sent to the land every year; industry has achieved “dazzling” results; the amount of manufactured goods now produced is more than three times as large as under Horthy, etc., etc.

There are convenient, “conclusive” statistics for every argument. And there are no counter-arguments. If a naive, or courageous, listener raises an impolitic question, the answer is simple: he has fallen victim to hostile enemy propaganda. All the agitator has to do is to turn to his interlocutor and ask him “Comrade (or friend), is it because you listen to broadcasts from abroad that you happen to be so well informed on the enemy’s propaganda?” In defending himself against this charge, the questioner is obliged to do the agitator’s own work: he protests that such is not the case, that he is a loyal citizen, that the regime’s achievements have really been great and that everything is at its best in the best of all possible worlds: the Communist world.

Both the agitator and the people he “activates” are therefore conditioned to ignore or gloss over topics that bring into question the real meaning of Communism in action. The agitator’s training, as has been shown, teaches him to restrict himself to “safe” subjects, and he would not be entrusted with his missionary work if he gave any indication of doubt or unhealthy “decadent” curiosity. Fundamental questions, such as, for instance, a comparison between Communism and any other system are automatically ruled out: “It is well known” that all other systems are fascist, reactionary and bound to rot and decay. In any case, these questions have been decided long ago by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and their disciples, and only a demented person or a subversive could doubt the accuracy of their (expurgated) writings.

Despite these restrictions of form and content, and despite the elaborate system of education, intra-Party indoctrination, screening and controls, agitators and People’s educators are subjected to the regular double-check that permeates every Communist organization. The watcher watches and is in turn watched; he spies and is spied upon, he is an informer and very little that he himself thinks, does or feels is unknown to the Party.

The simplest check is organizational, for both educators and agitators are made to work in groups of two or more, and they constantly watch each other and report to higher authorities. Furthermore, to discourage collusion and un-



Title: That's the kind of agitation we don't want.

Caption: "... brother, electrification really helps ..."

Ludas Matyi (Budapest), March 3, 1955

wanted friendships within the groups, or worse, sentimental ties between agitators and the people, Party emissaries are constantly rotated from group to group and from district to district. Secondly, educators and agitators are closely watched by Party informers planted in their meetings. Finally, activists and educators have to submit detailed reports on their own activities. Though nominally these reports are supposed to contain an evaluation of the population in the district, they also serve as a political profile of the author.

Educators and agitators work on a year-to-year basis and their performance is reviewed every twelve months, so that, if they wish to protect themselves and preserve the prerogatives of their positions, they have to do all that is expected of them, including spying. Because of his house-to-house rounds, the educator is often able to gather information withheld from other Party functionaries. It is his duty to discover such information and forward it to the proper authorities. Needless to say, the educator's visit is dreaded by the people, but highly valued by the Party. On February 5, 1953, *Szabad Nep* declared, for instance, that "People's educators are the standard bearers of the Party's policy, the vanguard of socialism. They convey the true words of the Party to the toiling millions." Their task is in fact so important and the controls so rigid that non-Party people are sometimes drawn into "educational" activity. As explained by *Szabad Nep* of March 2, 1952, these persons are "non-member workers, toiling peas-

ants, intellectuals, young people and women who have accepted Party policy, love the Party, and are ready to work with devotion for the realization of the goals set by the Party." Mass organizations are the channels through which the Party draws non-members into Party activity, particularly in villages, where cadres are not as extensive as in urban centers. It is important to note, however, that Party members have to attend "People's Educational Conferences," at which the chairman reads reports from individual members and then issues instructions on coming activities. Non-Party members are barred from these meetings; as a result, fellow-travellers are left in the dark on crucial matters of strategy and have to look for "guidance" from a Party member, usually the senior partner of the inevitable group of two or more.

Present Problems

The general tenor of propaganda and agitation was set long ago by Lenin and, though variations have been introduced by his successors, his intransigence and self-righteousness, his use of vilification and slander and, above all, his concept of the Party as an elite destined to lead the masses, have survived to this day. Both Lenin and Stalin retreated when retreat was the only way out of an impasse, but they always made sure they preserved their ability to come back to the attack with redoubled vigor. They made sure, in other words, never to impair the Party's prestige and its unquestioned supremacy.

The latest "retreat" in the USSR following Stalin's death was of that order. Khrushchev admitted that Soviet agri-

culture was in many respects less efficient than before the Revolution, the secret police was discredited and partly checked, and some aspects of Stalinism were either repudiated or quietly altered; the authority, the power and the prestige of the Party were however carefully preserved. In Hungary, on the other hand, the new concessionary policy snowballed into a direct threat to the very existence of the Party. For many months following the inauguration of the New Course in the summer of 1953, a strong faction within the Party deliberately set about reducing its hegemony by building up parallel agencies (the Patriotic People's Front, for example), and by questioning the very essence of Party policies. A new kind of criticism arose, denying the infallibility of the Party's dogma, rejecting the usual lies and distortions. Many Party members went so far as to suggest that it might be advisable to drop all pretenses and start looking facts squarely in the face.

At member meetings, particularly in Party organizations of intellectuals, propagandists and authors, a clash developed between those who wanted to enlarge the scope of the new criticism and those who contended that both propaganda and criticism should revolve around "achievements," as in the past. Lajos Konya, a partisan of frankness, explained his views at the November 1954 meeting of the Writers' Guild:

"As long as obstructive, negative factors predominate in our country, it is quite natural that our literary men [including, of course, propagandists] consider it their main duty to deal with them . . . we can no longer start from principles of what things should be like, or what they will



Caption: "No contributions to the discussion? Then I declare, with great joy, that all of you are satisfied with my management."

Ludas Matyi (Budapest), November 11, 1954

be like at some future date . . . our only solid basis is the reality of the present, as seen by us and not as learned from reports." (*Uj Hang* [Budapest], November-December, 1954).

The poet Peter Kuczka put it more succinctly and even more bluntly:

"That is what I saw, that is how it was, that was the truth. . . .

"I do not believe in any mirage.

"No matter how alluringly it shimmers." (*Tarsadalmi Szemle*, January 1955).

The reaction set in long before the famous March Central Committee resolution. It is now apparent that while the so-called "Nagy faction" sought to enlarge areas of freedom, another Party group, sensing the dangers inherent in such a policy, fought for a "harder" line. Thus, in the very same January 1955 *Tarsadalmi Szemle*, Erno Havas, one of the Party's top ideologists, counter-attacked in the following vein:

"People who contrast individual experiences with 'reports' seek to besmirch functionaries who, for a decade or longer, fought for a better life in this country, and carried on their shoulders the people's worries. . . . Small wonder, then, that this [destructive] 'attitude' has created so many short stories, sketches . . . describing the stupid, inhuman Party or State functionary."

In the main, Havas' stand has now become official policy. A *Szabad Nep* article of May 22, 1955, for example, summarized the effects of Nagy's liberalism in the following terms:

" . . . in his notorious and harmful article of October 20, 1954, Comrade Imre Nagy wrote as follows: 'The old-time economic policy gave an entirely erroneous interpretation to Socialism . . . it disregarded man . . . it narrowed down the concept of Socialism to the highest increase of iron-and-steel production. . . .'

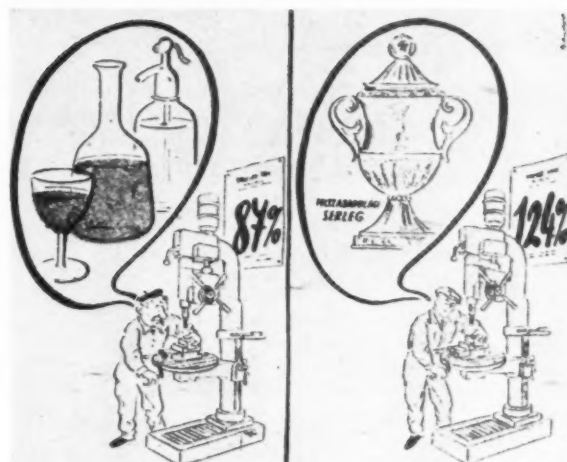
"It is clear to everyone that *this is no criticism but calumny*. . . .

"This 'criticism' misled some comrades, so that they too wrote in this spirit about the Party, and the Party's policy. . . ." (Italics in original).

Ever since the March resolution, therefore, any criticism tending to undermine the prestige of the Party has been proscribed. Once again the Party's purity and its ascendancy have been removed from "contamination" by the masses. But many of the means once used by propagandists and activists to buttress the power of the Party under Stalinism have not been restored. Their task is to induce workers to raise production and productivity, tighten discipline and lower production costs; to see to it that farmers join collectives and that, in general, all the unexpected "runaway" effects of "liberalization" are checked at once. They must, in short, help in the implementation of an unpopular program without, however, using outright force. They can no longer reason with the people, nor can they order them about. What then *are* they to do? There are clear indications that the Party's agents do not know.

"It cannot be said that all Party functionaries completely understand the Central Committee resolution and that

Those Who During Work . . .



" . . . think of the glass . . ." " . . . think of the cup . . ."

Ludas Matyi (Budapest), March 24, 1955

they are working in its spirit." This gross understatement was made by Ferenc David, First Secretary of the Szolnok County Party Committee at the Conference of District Secretaries, whose proceedings were broadcast by Radio Budapest on March 26. The conference appears to have been convoked in an attempt to "explain" some of the basic contradictions of the Central Committee's resolution. Two weeks later, on April 8, Radio Budapest had to return to the same topic:

"In our Party, resolutions and decisions mark merely the beginning of the work: the resolutions must be carried out. . . . Lately, many people have misunderstood or misinterpreted the principle of collective leadership. Some people, for instance, have questioned the binding character of the resolutions of superior Party organs and want to indulge in unending polemics about them.

"This is a profoundly erroneous attitude, and people adopting it often wish to avoid implementing the resolutions through the use of idle chatter. Once the resolutions are passed it is the duty of every Party member to carry them out and to protect the prestige of the leading organs, and through them, the Party as a whole."

These extracts show that Party functionaries, when faced with concrete problems, either "reinterpret" resolutions or fall into endless "discussions" to camouflage their inability to act as directed. In some instances, a third way out of the impasse was found: activists and other functionaries, unable to understand the subtleties of the middle-road approach or emotionally ill-equipped to enter into the "spirit of restrained harshness," returned to Stalinist methods. If results were demanded of them, then they would obtain them no matter how hard they had to drive the people. Thus, hardly had the March Resolution been passed, when, on the 25th of the month, Lajos Acs found it necessary to state that:

"It must not be forgotten for a moment that the relevant resolutions of the June 1953 Central Committee ses-

sion and the Third Party Congress are unchangedly correct and remain effective. The working peasantry must understand this, otherwise it might happen that individual peasants become afraid and distrustful."

An even clearer indication that the Party high command expected too hard or too swift a shift to Stalinist methods, and that it feared such a reaction, can be inferred from the following passage in a *Szabad Nep* editorial of March 19, 1955:

"The struggle against rightist views [those held by Nagy and his followers] must be waged in such a manner as to prevent the re-emergence of sectarian views. . . . In Szolnok and Somogy, as well as in other counties, some speakers [People's educators, agitators] limited the struggle against the enemy to the application of administrative measures [arbitrary, Stalinist-type of policy enforcement]. . . . *We must not go into the other extreme. . . .*" [Italics added]

It is one thing to point to possible errors, but quite another to prescribe means to avoid them. Very often the contradictions in the resolutions are reflected in the Party's advice as to how to carry them out. The following extract from an April 1 *Szabad Nep* editorial recommends a thorough study of the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, as well as a dedication to pragmatism. How the two are to be reconciled, particularly at a time when the main Party policies are modified, and radically modified, every few months, is not explained:

"The resolutions of our Party involve the application of Marxist-Leninist principles in our country. Their study and their correct application demands a thorough study of Marxist-Leninism and a study of conditions prevailing in the country. Party functionaries and Party members should be unsparing in their efforts and *if some statement of a resolution is not quite clear to them, they should look for the correct explanation in the books of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin*. There they will find what they thought about the role of heavy industry, about the worker-peasant alliance, about the battle against deviations. . . . The study of the resolutions, the clearing of 'questions of principle, the fight against rightist opinion, cannot be carried out abstractly, but only in close connection with local problems.'" [Italics added]

Rural Problems

The original June 1953 resolution reversed past stress on forced collectivization and sought to remedy the disastrous agricultural situation by granting concessions to private farmers. The regime set out to restore their confidence by allowing partial de-collectivization, by eliminating many of the discriminatory regulations and by encouraging them to reap greater rewards through higher production. This attitude was expressed by then Premier Nagy when he said that:

"To a decisive extent our agricultural production rests on individual farmers whose produce is not only indispensable for the country but whose productive development as regards both crop-raising and livestock breeding is of national interest. The government therefore considers

it as its foremost duty to assist the production of individual farms and to provide them with the means of production, tools, fertilizer, improved grain seeds, and so forth. The government wishes to reinforce by all available means the security of the peasants' holdings and their production."

The enjoinder to use "all available means" to achieve this goal included using activists in furthering the new program. For some eighteen months, then, little was said about collectivization, and the main duty of the Party's agents was to help peasants help themselves. This the latter did, but to an extent unforeseen by the regime. First, peasants showed a tremendous enthusiasm for the de-collectivization phase of the program and, in the early part of autumn 1953, the exodus was so great that the regime had to reverse itself and call a halt after the swift exit of more than 50 percent of the collective farm membership. Later, while the Communists were able to hold on to the skeleton of what was left of their rural reorganization, they were robbed of a substantial part of expected returns. Peasants produced more, but they kept the surplus for their own use or for sale at the high free market prices. They refused to comply with delivery quotas, even though these had been reduced. In many instances Party functionaries reprimanded them only perfunctorily or even helped them cheat the State. With the passage of time it became clear that the situation had gotten out of hand and that something had to be done: either, as in Yugoslavia, a liquidation of all collectives not built on a genuine "voluntariness" or a return to more stringent methods. In his March 12 address to the Budapest Party activists, Rakosi clearly pointed to the second alternative: "Let us admit frankly that during the past 18 months the Socialist sector in the villages made no headway, and in fact fell back. On the basis of our Central Committee resolution we will slowly but firmly resume the course of building a Socialist agriculture."

How much "firmness" activists are to apply, however, has not been settled, even among the top Party leadership. In his March 25 speech, Acs stated that complete "Socialization" of agriculture by 1960, "lies within the realm of possibilities." The following day, Rakosi contradicted him with the opinion that "for many long years to come there will be tens and hundreds of thousands of individual farmers." A similar split was apparent with respect to the immediate job at hand. Should activists push for a numerical increase in collectives, or should they attempt to improve the quality of already existing farms? Acs stressed the first alternative: ". . . from this year on, the numerical development of the cooperative is possible, but it is too ambitious to hope that the number of cooperatives can be doubled in a few months." Rakosi, on the other hand, took exception to such speculation: "It is not sufficient to speak only of quantitative increase of cooperatives . . . it is extraordinarily important to improve those already existing." The Party Secretary also reminded his audience that 70 percent of the land is still in the hands of private farmers and that "as long as individual farmers do not decide voluntarily to join the cooperatives . . . we shall continue

to help them in every way so that they can produce as much as possible."

To reconcile these two concepts—help to individual peasants and a simultaneous increase in collectivization—the Party seems to have adopted a policy that can be described as a "restricted-harshness-by-example." The "kulak," ignored or only mildly rebuked after the inception of the New Course, has again become a scapegoat for regime failures. As now used, the term is applied most frequently to peasants who own their own land and, irrespective of the size of their holding, have failed to comply with regulations. The standard class warfare definition of the kulak as an exploiter of poor peasants is mentioned, but generally only briefly and mostly in connection with "voluntariness" in recollectivization. Typical of the present anti-kulak agitation campaign is the following statement by Acs as printed in *Magyar Nemzet* (Budapest), March 26, 1955:

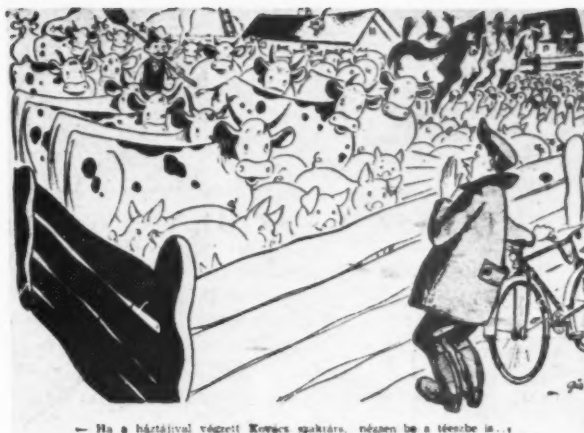
"In the villages our agitation . . . encounters the counter-agitation of the class enemy in the provinces—the kulaks and their helpers. . . . The working peasants of the villages must isolate the reactionary elements . . . and expose them. The most widespread activity of the kulaks is speculation. Besides this, the kulak sabotages his delivery and tax-paying dues in the most impertinent manner. It is the duty of the District Party organizations to detect all forms of kulak activities, to drive the kulaks out of every democratic organ, to stop their speculations and to force them to deliver and to pay taxes. . . ."

The difficulty confronting activists is that, as far as private farmers are concerned, a direct attack on their status would cause them to reduce production. That is, individual farmers will refuse to enlarge their output if, by so doing, they fear to become "kulaks." Hence the understandable caution shown by the regime in not attaching this stigma indiscriminately to all peasants who have improved their lot as a result of the 1953 concessions. Instructions to Party functionaries therefore make it explicit that present policies must be implemented carefully, on a case-by-case basis and not dogmatically through generalized propaganda:

"Though the stand taken in favor of the Central Committee resolution constituted an important factor, the membership meetings should have paid more attention to the elucidation of those problems that remain obscure and difficult to understand. Another shortcoming of the meetings was that in many places the consequences of the rightist distortion of the Party's policy were not illustrated adequately by local examples. . . ." (*Szabad Nep*, April 14, 1955).

Industry and Mass Organizations

Both in their origin and their orientation Communist Parties are primarily urban. Agricultural problems, though important theoretically and practically, hold only a peripheral interest for the Communists, and as long as the Party feels that its industrial worker base is "safe," it is confident it can handle other sectors. Communism and industrialization have in fact been made to appear synonymous in Party lore, and the success, prestige and elan of both are inextricably linked. Gigantomania, elaborate



— Ha a hátsójával négyez Kovács mekény, nézen be a téscebe in . . .

Title: A Collective Farm President's Nightmare.

Caption: "When you have finished working on your household plot, Comrade Kovacs," the collective farm president says to one of the farmers, "please stop by at the kolkhoz too."

Ludas Matyi (Budapest), March 24, 1955

planning, charts and statistics and all the other paraphernalia of Communist forced industrialization are not merely means toward an end; they also reflect the Marxist mythos of man's perfectibility and his ability to shape his environment into a better world. It is this vision of an ultimate paradise through industrialization that has infused the Communist movement with its fanaticism, its self-abnegation, its patience, self-righteousness and optimism, all merged into a fervor of religious intensity.

The Party zealot under Stalin—activists, People's educators and other functionaries—demanded heavy sacrifices from the people, but they did so with pride and faith. They were ruthless—but for the people's own good! Little did it matter if injustice, poverty and repression became ever more oppressive: these were but the matrix out of which a new society would arise. The people asked for food, and clothing and some leisure; the activists offered them factories, machines, norms, more norms and still higher norms.

On July 4, 1953, Nagy broke this frantic spell. "There was no justifiable reason," he stated, "for an exaggerated industrialization and a striving for industrial self-sufficiency." In the months that followed, the folly of past policies and attitudes was laid bare. A typical comment was this passage from *Szabad Nep*, October 27, 1954: "Under the motto of 'country of iron and steel' we took the course of disproportionate and excessive industrialization, the harmful consequences of which have now become evident. . . . We could have done without the rapid development of Sztalinvaros."

But could they? Economically, the answer is an emphatic yes, for no country need be self-sufficient. Certainly Hungary would have profited from traditional agricultural exports in the immediate post World War II period. But could the Communists afford not to develop Sztalinvaros? Could they afford a gradual development of their industrial power with all that such a proportionate growth in-

volved in ideological adjustment? The experiment under the New Course was disastrous, not only economically but, much more basically, from a Party morale point of view.

For months, the industrial elite's privileges and prestige were overshadowed by the new strength acquired by their former "inferiors"—peasants, artisans and intellectuals. But the industrial elite also happened to have been the top bracket of the Party's middle echelons, so that, in effect the new policy meant a lowering in status of a majority of activists in the Party-State organization. Party activists, in other words, were put in the anomalous position of having to further the partial liquidation of all they stood for. Many of them resisted, and many others became so discouraged that they ceased all activities. Toward the end of last year, Andras Kurti (*Some Aspects of the Fight against Social Democracy*) warned that: "Social Democrats . . . try to create the impression that our new Party and government policy primarily favors the peasantry at the expense of the working class. . . . They try to create an atmosphere in which the slogan is 'industry has done its share, now it is up to the villages.'"

If we substitute "Nagy" or "rightist deviationists" for "Social Democrats" the above sentence represents fairly accurately the feeling experienced by many Party stalwarts under the New Course. While this line was still being parroted throughout the country at the beginning of the year, *Szabad Nep* chose to feature the following headline on its front page on January 23: "Our People's Pride, the Stalin Iron Works and Sztalinvaros Under Construction." Shortly thereafter the post-Malenkov stress on heavy industry became once again official Party policy. It is significant, however, that immediate plans do not call for a marked increase in industrial tempo—only a 5.7 increase as compared to about 35 percent in the Stalinist era. What was really at stake was explained in *Szabad Nep* of March 10:

"Even among the Party workers and the most politically-conscious segments of the working class, a confused and bitter feeling was aroused by denial of the achievements of the heroic building construction, in which they played a major part. Our people were grieved by the negative, often sarcastic tone applied to the fortress of Socialist Hungary, the creations of self-sacrificing hard work such as Sztalinvaros, Inota and Komlo. . . ."

The present line was summed up by Rakosi in his March 11 speech: "Recently the fact that . . . the industrial workers, led by the Communist Party, are the motivating, driving power, the very soul of this country, has been eclipsed from our minds. . . . Everybody understands that leadership . . . is the role of the working class led by the Communist Party, and that this is the only way to realize a strong worker-peasant alliance."

A similar "return" to power by the Party is now taking place in mass organizations, particularly the Patriotic People's Front and the youth movement. As defined in *Szabad Nep* of October 27, 1954, the Front was supposed to be: "the most extensive social and political movement of our People's Democratic State and social order . . .

Két író gyereke beszélget



Caption: "Your father is a writer, isn't he?"

"So he is. And he is really great: he has already managed to lose touch with the masses."

Ludas Matyi (Budapest), February 24, 1955

its task is to advance propositions in accordance with the interests and opinions of all the working people in connection with important matters in the political, economic and cultural fields. . . ." The widest possible scope was given to it, and therefore many Party members apparently felt that its authority would impinge on their own power. On October 9, 1954, for instance, *Szabad Nep* had to score "left-wing deviationists" whose "sectarian views" aimed at restricting the Front's operations. Here again, it appears that activists were unwilling to hand over part of their functions to a body they did not altogether control.

In other cases, both Party and non-Party people took the new line seriously and a great deal of initiative passed from the Party to the Front. *Dunantuli Naplo* (Pecs), March 15, 1955, reported that "When the local PPF commissions were formed, the local councils elected and the Farmers' Circles [village organization of the PPF] founded, few or no collective farm members were elected to these bodies." The same paper also indicates that Party members, particularly those who were supposed to lead the masses, were so demoralized that they stopped all "activization" and let the people do what they wanted:

"In Szabadszentkiraly, Communists as well as collective farm members were excluded from the Farmers' Circles led by kulaks. They even demanded for themselves the office rooms of the Party organization. In Ozdalu, the kulak members of the local PPF commission made plans for dissolving the Party organizations. In Boly, the by-law project of the local Farmers' Circle declared that 'speaking about politics is forbidden under pain of exclusion.' . . ."

On March 12, Istvan Kovacs gave agitators the latest instructions: "The Party must lead the People's Front; the People's Front may not get the upper hand over the Party. . . . There have been strong tendencies in the Patriotic People's Front to control and manage the councils . . . and at the same time there has been an attempt . . . to win control over the auxiliary groups of the Party, the Communist Youth League and Trade Unions."

Prospects

Party theoreticians have for years drawn the contrast between the smooth, purposeful sailing of Communist society, and the rudderless floundering of capitalism. They insist theirs is a new world launched, ours an old world dying; they grow and we deteriorate. They know where they are going and how to reach their goal, while for us there is neither means nor goal. The propagation of this myth was careful and considered, and then suddenly the highest Soviet leaders had to acknowledge that, in crucial sectors of national life, more than three decades of Communism had brought much stagnation and confusion.

The viability of the entire system was not really called into question though a challenging series of concessions and, more recently, new grandiose plans were instituted: decollectivization (though not in the USSR), more consumer goods, lower taxes and delivery quotas, on the one hand, and now conquest of huge tracts of virgin land, a wholesale conversion to square-cluster corn planting, and the firing of thousands of collective farm managers. A divergence between Satellite and Soviet policy is apparent in 1955 but with the old credo of infallibility gone, and the confession of great mistakes by top leadership, Party members have become apathetic and confused: they don't know what to do. Yesterday it was Lysenko, today it is Maltsev; yesterday it was wheat, today it is corn; tomorrow who knows what? Party activists are ordered to preach, direct and supervise, but the orders are frequently contradictory and the policies blurred. So far, no clear-cut

answer has been given to Party members.

In Hungary, the propagandist has a comparatively easy job: all he has to do is to repeat the main points in important Party resolutions. At present, therefore, the propagandist stresses the importance of Party supremacy, heavy industry, collective and individual farms; he advocates a "tightening" of discipline, and speaks of more and better "Socialist competitions," more production and higher productivity, and at the same time he forecasts a higher standard of living for the people. The activist, on the other hand, has to act. He deals with people who, on the whole, are antagonistic toward him. He has to show results, and they must be the "correct" results. His training has taught him little besides how to obey orders and how to give them. During the New Course he often ceased to function because the subtleties of persuasion, indirect control and real leadership were alien to him.

Now the activist's position is even more precarious. Under the Nagy government, popular initiative was sometimes encouraged and instruments created to channel it. Present policy calls for a return to more orthodox Communist means without, however, countenancing the use of methods that make orthodoxy possible. New and greater efforts are called for, new and more subtle skills and strengths, but the Party faithful have had their faith and strength sapped, and what strains they can be subjected to and what accomplishments they can succeed in remain open to serious question. More than ever, in this critical period, the Communist Party needs zealous and competent propagandists, educators and agitators. So far, it has not found them.

Propaganda On Wheels

A new device for propagating Marxism among the Poles has been introduced by the Warsaw regime in the form of seven railway cars specially equipped for showing films and playing records. They run chiefly on the provincial railroad lines, and are shunted to sidings at small stations, where they remain for several days, attracting the local population with loud music. After a certain number of people—often mostly children—have gathered, a propaganda film is shown, political lectures are delivered, and Communist books and newspapers distributed. The regime hopes to offset the high cost of this venture by the results obtained among inhabitants of remote regions.

Three Polish Poems

THE THREE poems printed below are not typical Communist poems although they appeared in *Przegląd Kulturalny* (Warsaw), March 10-16, 1955. Tadeusz Rozewicz, the poet presented here, is a poet whatever his political convictions and allegiances. Out of the maze of themes permitted or forbidden by the Communists, he has found some experiences available to all men: in "A Wedding Ring," we catch a glimpse of Ophelia; in "Hershlik the Carpenter,"

an image of a tormented man; and in "The Big Big World," a minor Lady Macbeth. The margin of error is small, the chances to escape the Communist confines, even for a moment in literature, are few, but in these poems from Rozewicz's volume, *The Wells of Darkness*, we see something of the life, the tradition, and the sensibility of the Polish people as it continues in spite of the Communist occupation of their culture and their country.

Hershlik the Carpenter

I was very much afraid
to walk between the blind walls
of houses
for there would fly
Hershlik the crazy
carpenter
the tax screw would go deeper
the screw would go tighter
pressing and
shining cruelly
He was a good man
Hershlik the carpenter
he sold furniture on installments
working from dawn
till night
his wife died
and left him with six children
and when she was dying
saying nothing
just looking
The screw went in
tighter and tighter
until a bird flew from under it
an untroubled man
freed from burden
and senses
I was walking dressed in white
a little boy when he flew
between the walls
he flew over me with his hands
outstretched in his black caftan
and shrieked
my heart stood still
but he just stroked my head
and flew off
People would say:
this one gets on fine
no troubles no worries.



The Big Big World

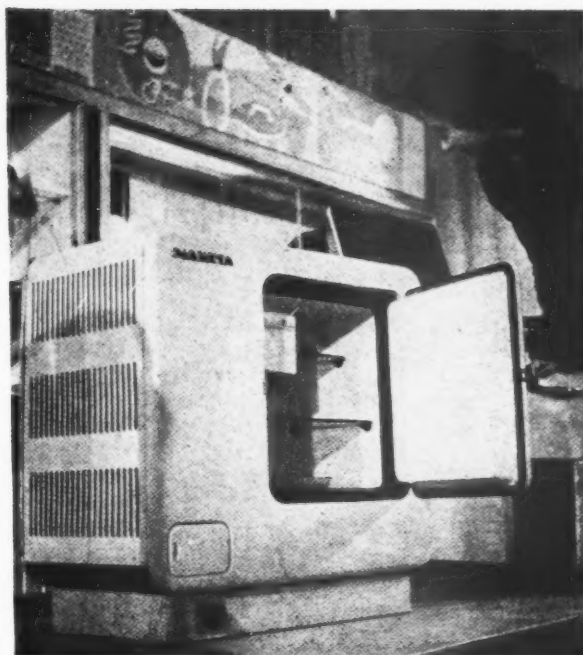
There was no room
for that child
so she tore it out
of herself
and killed it
She would walk in her shirt
barefooted on the needles of frost
she would walk and dance
she would walk around alone
in this world
Trees tucked
in straw blankets slept
birds had left for warmer countries
She would cry and sing
a few words only:
"I have a devil a little devil
a little devil
here"
pointing
to her flat chest
and she laughed quietly weeping
walking around barefooted
walking dancing
within our small courtyard
people said:
Are the likes of her badly off?
She thinks of nothing.

A Wedding Ring

She would come to the church
in a white veil
she would carry weeds and flowers
on her breast
She bows and staggers
searches with her hand
searches on earth
searches in heaven
in people's eyes
she calls someone begs
cuddles to herself
she looks for the fiancé
who has duped her
and disappeared
the blue bird
She puts out her hand
to the Good Lord
to trees horses
to the vicar
she puts out her hand
to birds and children
to brooks and flowers
to clouds and weeds
who will take
my little hand
who will take
my little hand
and wed it
She would take kisses
off her lips
and hand them around
children ran after her
throwing earth
and she smiling
bloomed beautifully
because on her finger she had
a wedding ring as big as sun
as bright as sun
People would say nothing
nod and go by.

Soviet Trade Offensive: West Europe, II

*This is the second of a two-part article on East-West trade, which is part of a larger series on the foreign trade pattern of the Soviet orbit. The following analysis of Communist trade policy throws light on both foreign and domestic policies of the Soviet bloc countries.**



Caption: A Maneta gas-operated refrigerator. Annual output of refrigerators is around 50,000.

Czechoslovak Life (Prague), March 1955

Germany

The German Federal Republic's trade with the Soviet bloc (exclusive of East Germany) showed a substantial rise in 1954 although its overall importance remained at about the same level as during 1953. Exports to the Soviet bloc rose from \$78.7 million or 1.8% of total 1953 exports to \$102.6 million or 1.9% of the 1954 total. Similarly, Soviet bloc imports increased from \$99.5 million or 2.6% of total 1953 imports to \$121.6 million, still 2.6% of the 1954 total.

The 1954-55 agreement between West Germany and Bulgaria was signed in Bonn on February 27, 1954, valid from January 1, 1954, through March 31, 1955, and providing for exchange of goods of some \$13 million each way. To be in force for 15 months, this agreement succeeded an 18-month agreement which called for Bulgarian exports of \$11.9 million and German exports of \$11.44 million. The trade differential in the agreement was to be used for liquidating Bulgarian debts to Germany. The principal products to be traded (with those under the previous 18-month agreement in parenthesis for comparison) were: German exports of machinery and replacement parts, \$2.9 million (\$3.0 million); ball-bearings, \$200,000 (\$100,000); electrical equipment and instru-

ments, \$600,000 (\$300,000); optical and precision instruments, \$350,000 (\$230,000); rolled and cast iron and steel products, \$2,200,000 (\$1,415,000); chemical and pharmaceutical products, \$2,300,000 (\$3,135,000). In return Bulgaria agreed to export: wheat, 25,000 tons (9,000 tons); corn, 5,000 tons (8,000 tons); rye, 500 tons (0); rice, \$500,000 (\$80,000); oil seeds, \$1,000,000 (\$680,000); eggs \$1,250,000 (\$1,500,000); grapes, \$1,000,000 (\$2,000,000); tomatoes, \$500,000 (same); tobacco, \$1,000,000 (\$800,000).

Significant differences between this agreement and the previous one were: (a) doubling Germany's ball-bearing and electrical equipment exports, and substantial increases in optical instruments and iron and steel products; (b) decrease in German chemical exports, probably because of recent chemical plant building in Bulgaria; (c) increases in grain exports pledged by Bulgaria; (d) increases in Bulgaria's planned rice exports; (e) decrease in pledged grape exports, probably because of deterioration of grape cultivation which the Bulgarian regime has been attempting to counter through recent legislation providing increased incentives.

An additional West German-Bulgarian trade protocol was signed in Sofia on April 29, 1955, regulating trade from April 1, 1955 to March 31, 1956. Value of goods to be exchanged is \$11.5 million for West German and \$12.1 million for Bulgarian exports. The difference will probably be used to liquidate Bulgarian debts to Germany. In the

* All trade statistics in this article are derived from official Western sources, the United Nations, and the U.S. Department of Commerce.

early part of 1955, Bulgaria had \$416,000 worth of goods waiting clearance in Germany because Bulgaria had overdrawn her \$1 million *Bank Deutscher Lander* swing credit by \$200,000. Commodities to be traded remain the same as previously. West Germany is to supply rolled metals (\$2,200,000), machinery and replacement parts (\$2,400,000), precision and optical instruments, electrical equipment (\$600,000), textiles (\$500,000), pharmaceutical and chemical products (\$2,000,000), dyes, superphosphates, etc. in return for Bulgarian grapes, tomatoes, tobacco, eggs, wines, dried fruit, vegetables, essential oils, etc.

A new West German-Czechoslovak trade and payments agreement for 1955 was signed in Bonn on February 5, 1955, providing for an increase in goods turnover between the two countries amounting to some 20%. West German deliveries are to be \$22 million, Czechoslovak \$24 million, the trade differential to be used to liquidate the clearing debt incurred by Czechoslovakia under the 1954 agreement. The current agreement calls for German exports of ferro alloys (\$3,000,000) steel and iron (\$2,000,000), chemical products (\$2,000,000), agricultural products

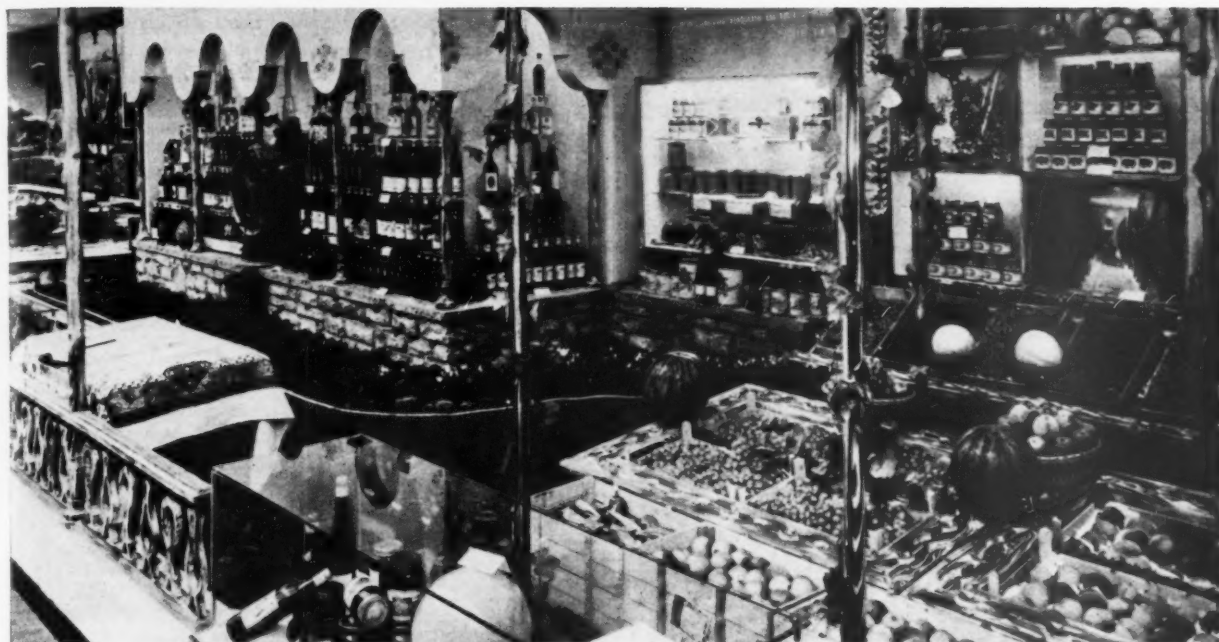
(\$1.7 million) fish, meat, etc. German exports will also cover such invisible items as Hamburg dock and railroad transport charges, which amount to \$8 million. In return Czechoslovakia has agreed to export lignite (\$4.5 million), lumber (\$2.5 million), stone and clay (\$2.1 million), eggs (\$2 million), malt (\$1.5 million), oleaginous plants (\$0.6 million), glass, chemicals, machinery, etc. Despite drastic internal fuel shortages Czechoslovakia has agreed to export \$4.5 million worth of lignite.

The West German government does not consider trade between it and East Germany as foreign trade and therefore such trade is not listed in the German Federal Republic's foreign trade publications. The 1954 agreement between these two zones called for exchange of goods of \$176 million each way. However, at the year's end, West German exports to East Germany were only \$101.7 million and her imports only \$101.9 million.* The 1955 trade agreement announced January 20, 1955, called for exchange of \$250 million worth of goods. It is doubtful if

* *Wirtschaft und Statistik* (Stuttgart).



A section of the Poznan Fair Grounds where the Poznan Fair will be held this July. In addition to the Soviet bloc countries, 200 firms from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, West Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom will participate. *Polish Foreign Trade* (Warsaw), Nov. 25, 1954



Bulgarian Exhibit at the 1954 London Food Fair.

Bulgarian Foreign Trade (Sofia), December 15, 1954.

anything like that amount will be traded, particularly with the controversy on East Germany's raising tariffs on the autobahn between West Germany and Berlin. West Germany is to ship pig iron, iron and steel products, edible oil, fat, farm products, meat, and grain, in exchange for soft coal, sugar, mineral oil, optical goods, textiles, and wood manufactures. Significantly, West Germany is exporting grain to the East, where some of the country's best agricultural land is located.

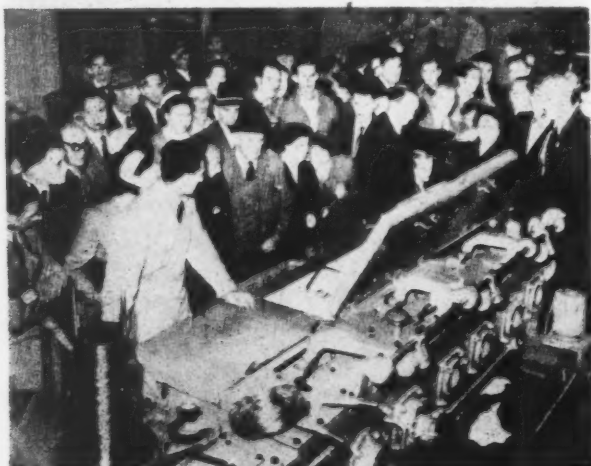
The most recent West German-Hungarian trade agreement was signed in Bonn on January 23, 1954, valid for the year 1954, and extended through June 30, 1955. It provided for West German exports of \$21.3 million and Hungarian exports of \$20 million, the trade differential to be used to liquidate Hungarian debts in Germany, which at the time of the agreement amounted to some \$3.4 million. The new agreement also called for abolishing the \$3.5 million swing credit between the two countries, replacing it with a more flexible system where swing is adjusted quarterly and will be 25% of the actual trade turnover during the preceding twelve months for exports or imports, whichever is lower. Under the agreement, Germany was to export iron and steel (\$3,800,000), chemicals and chemical products (\$3,200,000), non-electrical machinery (\$2,200,000), electrical machinery and mechanical equipment (\$2,100,000), textiles (\$2,000,000), automotive vehicles (\$900,000), steel construction equipment (\$800,000), steel, tin, and other metal products (\$800,000), coal and coke (\$600,000), optical and precision instruments (\$600,000), and timber and paper products (\$400,000). In re-

turn Hungary was to export agricultural products valued at \$16.5 million, etc.

A new Polish-West German trade agreement was signed in Warsaw on February 17, 1955, valid from January 1, 1955 to June 30, 1956, and providing for German exports of \$35.2 million and Polish exports of \$38.5 million, the difference to be used by Poland to pay for German services, especially railway traffic. The bilateral swing credit limit between the countries will be reduced from \$7.5 million to \$6.5 million as of October 1, 1955, and to \$6 million as of January 1, 1956. Poland exceeded her debt limit in the past year so that in April 1954, Germany placed an embargo on all shipments to Poland except purchases paid for in Western currencies and in barter deals where at least 30% of the sum involved was used to reduce Poland's debt. It is understood that Germany approved a \$9.5 million, 4-year credit to Poland, covered in a separate agreement, to finance deliveries of German heavy industrial goods. West Germany will export agricultural products (\$0.5 million), rolling mill and foundry products (\$9,000,000), chemical products (\$7,300,000), machinery (\$1,500,000), iron sheet metal goods (\$1,400,000), electrical equipment and machinery (\$1,000,000), precision and optical instruments (\$500,000), textiles (\$1,000,000), stone and earth (\$1,600,000). Polish exports include eggs (\$6,500,000), poultry (\$2,400,000), barley (\$1,700,000), other agricultural products (\$3,400,000), coal (\$5,000,000), wood and wood products (\$5,000,000), chemical products and raw materials (\$3,700,000), non-ferrous metals and metal waste (\$1,200,000).

A West German-Romanian trade and payments agreement was signed on December 4, 1954, valid through the calendar year 1955, and providing for mutual exchange of \$30 million worth of goods. The agreement contains a special provision for \$5 million worth of transit transactions by which Romania can export this amount of goods to third countries and receive in return up to \$2.7 million of German reexports such as wool, cotton and coffee and \$2.3 million of German merchandise. The purpose of such arrangement is to permit Romania to export such products as it has which Germany does *not* need to countries which do need them, and then to have those countries pay Germany, either in cash or in goods desired by Germany, for the German exports to Romania. Another special provision raised the swing credit from \$2.5 million to \$5 million. The following are some of the important German exports (with quantities of the 1954 agreement in parenthesis where available): hops, \$300,000 (\$100,000); fish, \$500,000 (same); seeds \$100,000 (same); iron and steel, \$6,200,000 (\$6,000,000); machinery and technical equipment (including \$200,000 worth of ball-bearings), \$2,850,000 (\$2,400,000); precision and optical instruments \$500,000 (\$350,000); clothing, textiles, yarns, and fibers, \$7,000,000 (\$4,000,000), etc. In return, Romania agreed to supply grain and fodder grain, \$7,500,000 (\$3,500,000), composed of 60,000 tons of wheat, and 40,000 tons of fodder grain, probably corn, although the Germans preferred barley, if possible; oil seeds and oil cake, \$1,300,000 (\$1,000,000); fodder seed, \$1,250,000; wood and wood products, \$4,000,000 (same); petroleum products, \$5,000,000 (\$4,000,000); feathers, hog bristles, and other animal products, \$1,500,000 (same); chemical products, \$200,000 (\$500,000); alkaloids, medicinal plants, and other pharmaceutical raw materials, \$750,000 (\$200,000). Significantly Romania has agreed to deliver more than twice the amount of grain this year than previously.

Sgt. Erikh Mansson, Stockholm



A display of machinery.
Hungarian Foreign Trade, December 1953.

No formal trade agreement exists between West Germany and the Soviet Union, although there was much talk of negotiating a \$60 million trade agreement in May 1954. One of the major impediments to trade has been the absence of formal diplomatic relations and official feeling in West Germany is that expansion of Soviet trade should come only after formal relations have been resumed in the form of official Soviet recognition of the Bonn government. Nevertheless, trade between the German Federal Republic and the USSR has made tremendous strides in the past year. On December 11, 1954, the first of 24 1,900 hp diesel-powered fishing trawlers (3,000 tons), being constructed in the Howaldt shipyards in Kiel, was launched. Reports indicate that the contract for these ships amounts to some \$50 million. On March 31, 1955, the first Soviet cargo vessel since World War II arrived with a cargo of coal at Hamburg, and on April 15, a Soviet freighter arrived in Bremen with 5,000 bales of Soviet cotton, the first Soviet cotton delivery since the end of the war.

Iceland

Iceland's trade with the Soviet bloc has increased substantially during the past year both in value and importance, principally because of the dispute between Iceland and Great Britain concerning the demarcation of Icelandic territorial waters for fishing purposes. The dispute has resulted in a virtual embargo of fish imports from Iceland into Britain, formerly one of Iceland's best customers, and Iceland has been forced to seek other markets for her fresh fish, namely the USSR. This situation has tied Icelandic trade closer to the Soviet barter system and given further support to Iceland's already large Communist Party (almost one-quarter of the last Icelandic Parliament was Communist-influenced).

Iceland's Soviet bloc exports increased from \$8.6 million or 19.9% of total 1953 exports to \$12.9 million or 24.9% of 1954 totals. Similarly, its imports have increased from \$6.3 million or 9.2% of total 1953 imports to \$12.7 million or 18.3% of the 1954 total.*

Iceland and Czechoslovakia signed a new trade agreement on August 31, 1954, valid as of September 16, and scheduled to run to August 31, 1957. The accompanying commodity lists, however, are subject to annual renegotiation after August 31, 1955. The agreement calls for expanding trade from \$1.8 million in each direction, provided for previously, to \$3.5 million. Iceland is to increase her quota of fish fillets to 6,000 tons, nearly twice as much as formerly. Because of poor catch, however, herring has been reduced from 7,000 to 2,000 tons. Other items to be delivered by Iceland include 500 tons of fish meal. In return, Czechoslovakia will deliver (previous quotas in parenthesis) textiles \$625,000 (\$333,000), sheets and pipe of asbestos \$167,000 (\$111,000), automotive vehicles, bicycles, agricultural equipment \$236,000 (\$69,000),

* Un; *Statistical Bulletin of the National Bank of Iceland*, January 1955.

nails and other wire products \$174,000 (\$69,000), rolled steel \$417,000 (0), ceramics, etc.

On September 9, 1954, a new global compensation agreement between Iceland and East-Germany was signed, scheduled to run from October 1, 1954 to the end of 1955, and providing for exports of fish from Iceland in return for East German exports of industrial products, sewing machines, and musical instruments.

A new trade and payments agreement between Iceland and Romania was signed on April 13, 1954, valid through the end of 1955, but it does not establish any set quotas. Iceland is to deliver fish in return for Romanian shipments of hardwood, grain, petroleum products, cement, fruit, chemical products, wood pulp, sole leather, glassware, feathers, etc.

Icelandic-Soviet trade is conducted on the basis of a two-year trade agreement signed on August 1, 1953, valid through July 31, 1955, and providing for an exchange of goods of some \$10 million annually in each direction. The USSR is to supply Iceland's entire petroleum requirements (200,000 tons) and in turn has agreed to take about 10% of the country's fish catch. The Soviets will also supply rye meal, wheat bran, cement, and steel.

Italy

Italy is the only West-European country whose trade with the Soviet bloc is controlled by Communists at both ends. At one end are the State trading organs of the USSR and the Satellites, on the other the trading companies, agencies, banks and cooperatives controlled, and generally owned, by the Italian Communist Party. A monopoly on both import and export to the Soviet bloc is thus held by these Communist companies. A December 6, 1954 New York *Times* article reported that kickbacks to the Communist Party by concerns trading with the Soviet orbit were reputed to have yielded \$6.4 million, while contraband of strategic materials was said to have brought an added \$3.2 million. These two figures jointly account for about 20% of the annual expenditures of the Italian CP. Elimination of this income would deal the Party a severe blow. It is recognized, however, that the Party's hold on East-West trade is presently so tight that only cutting off the trade entirely would break the grip. Recent reports indicate, moreover, that Italian Communist-owned companies are now beginning to handle intra-bloc transactions such as USSR-China trade, Franco-Soviet and Franco-Chinese trade.

The Communists have used their trade policy with shrewd awareness of its political implications. When in September 1954, for example, the US placed new obstacles in the way of sales of Italian almonds on the American market because California growers complained of unfair competition, the Communist-owned companies in Italy bought up the entire almond crop at higher than normal prices. This move, although a comparatively minor factor in Italo-American trade, served as a powerful propaganda weapon, particularly in the almond-growing region where the Communists are gaining strength.

Italo-Soviet bloc trade has shown some changes in the past year. Italy's exports to the Soviet bloc (excluding China) decreased from \$57.9 million or 3.9% of total 1954 exports to \$56.5 million or 3.5% of the 1954 total. Conversely, Italy's imports increased from \$46.4 million or 1.9% of total 1953 imports to \$62.9 million or 2.6% of the 1954 total.* Trade balance shifted from an export excess to an import excess; in short, Italy seems to have narrowed the Soviet bloc trade deficit of the previous year. It had been reported that the Italian government had tolerated credit extensions of \$25 million to the Communist countries to cover their trade deficits.

Italy was the first Western country to conclude a trade treaty with Albania, signed in Tirana on December 17, 1954. It will be based on a clearing account and calls for mutual exchange of \$400,000 worth of goods. Albania will supply crude oil, chromium, wool, hides, timber and other raw materials, in return for woolen yarn, linen, hemp, rayon, jute products, cork, industrial and edible fats, linseed oils, rice, and chemicals. The treaty is for one year, 1955, and is renewable.

The Italian Ministry of Commerce has recently authorized the Export and Import Society (SPEI), which operates in conjunction with the Ministry, to execute a trade exchange of \$10 million, on a global compensation basis, with East Germany. East Germany is to export potatoes, potassium salts, chemical products, typewriters, sewing machines, tools, crystalware, ceramics, machinery, scientific instruments, lenses, cutlery, machinery, sugar, etc. in return for agricultural products, wines, liquors, essential oils, canned fish, clothing, cork, plywood, sponges, cheese, salami, untanned bullock hides, seeds, shoes, tanning extracts, chemical products, hemp and rayon yarn.

A special agreement between the autonomous South Tyrol region of Trento and the GDR providing for exchange of \$1.6 million of goods was concluded in October 1954. Trento is to export Italian wines and agricultural products in return for GDR machinery, chinaware, glassware, and paper.

On January 26, 1954, a new Italo-Hungarian trade treaty was signed, valid for 1954 and renewed for 1955, providing for Italian exports of \$10 million and Hungary of \$10.9 million. Hungarian export surplus is to be used to cover transit fees, Italian port expenditures, etc. Italy's principle exports will be seeds (\$128,000), citrus fruits (4,450 tons), tobacco (\$160,000), pyrites (2,000 tons), hemp (1,250 tons), sulphur (\$96,000), dyes (\$96,000), mercury (\$80,000), copper sulphate (\$96,000), pharmaceutical raw materials and products (\$104,000), ball and roller bearings (\$1,200,000), machinery and machine tools (\$1,200,000), electrical machinery (\$96,000), automotive replacement parts (\$160,000), automotive vehicles, business machines (\$96,000), cow hides (\$160,000), etc. In return Hungary agreed to supply eggs (1,500 tons), egg products (\$560,000), oil seed (\$96,000), other seeds (\$480,000), medicinal plants (\$160,000), chemical products including alkaloids (\$288,000), pharmaceutical raw ma-

* United Nations.

terials and products (\$304,000), glass and porcelain articles (\$192,000), electrical equipment, instruments, machinery and parts thereof (\$280,000), machinery and machine tools, including agricultural machinery (\$584,000), etc.

Italian agreements with the Satellites have been extended: the Bulgarian agreement until December 31, 1955; Polish until March 31, 1955; and the Romanian commercial agreement of November 25, 1950, has been extended to December 19, 1955.*

Three important transactions took place within the sphere of Italo-Soviet trade relations, and were largely responsible for diminishing the USSR's trade deficit with Italy from \$40 million in mid-1954 to \$2 million on March 8, 1955. On January 30, 1954, a group of Italian businessmen reportedly visited Moscow and negotiated for purchase of 6,300 tons of Soviet cotton, worth \$5,280,000, said to be the largest quantity ever sold by the USSR to a single Western country. On February 5, 1954, a Rome broadcast announced that Italy had purchased 125,000 tons of grain from the USSR within the framework of the Italo-Soviet agreement of October 1953. A February 10, 1954, Rome broadcast announced further that negotiations had been completed for purchase of 350,000 tons of Russian crude oil to be processed in Italian refineries. The prices paid by the Italians were \$88.50 a ton of grain, substantially below the original asking price of \$114 per ton.

The Netherlands

Dutch trade with the Soviet bloc has shown some change in the past year. Dutch exports to the bloc showed a substantial increase, while imports from the bloc declined. For example, the Netherlands' 1953 Soviet bloc exports were \$60.7 million or 2.8% of total exports, while they were \$85.8 million and 3.6% of the 1954 total. The Netherlands' Soviet bloc imports declined from \$68.5 million or 2.9% of total 1953 imports to \$58.6 million or 2.1% of the 1954 total.**

On February 22, 1955, a trade agreement was signed in Prague between the Netherlands and Czechoslovakia governing the period from February 1, 1955 to January 31, 1956. Total turnover envisaged will be some \$29 million each way, or more than twice the \$11.6 million called for previously. Dutch exports to Czechoslovakia include seeds (\$132,000), cattle for slaughter, meat and bacon (2,000 tons), fish (4,000 tons), marine oil (500 tons), lard (2,500 tons), flax (1,300 tons), green peas (2,000 tons), butter (700 tons), textile waste and rags (1,700 tons), paints, dyes, and laquers (\$184,000), volatile and essential oils (\$184,000), chemical and pharmaceutical products (\$800,000), machinery and electrical and radio equipment (\$92,000), in return for Czechoslovak brewers' barley (3,000 tons), malt (7,000 tons), hops (200 tons), textiles (\$431,000), footwear (\$97,000), hides, furs, and

leather products (\$181,000), toys and musical instruments (\$139,000), sawed soft wood (50,000 cu. meters), furniture (\$100,000), chemical products and pharmaceutical raw materials (\$132,000), tiles, porcelain, technical porcelain materials (\$528,000), glass (\$1,040,000), slide fasteners and buttons (\$215,000), machinery (\$1,250,000), sewing machines (\$69,000), agricultural machinery including tractors (\$111,000), automotive vehicles, motorcycles and replacement parts (\$1,390,000), and bicycle parts and accessories (\$153,000).

On September 4, 1954, a trade and payments agreement was concluded between the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce for Germany, and the East-German Chamber for Foreign Trade scheduled to run from July 1, 1954 to June 30, 1955, and calling for exchange of more than \$6.5 million worth of goods. Holland is to export agricultural products, fish, textiles, superphosphates, leather and leather products, and essential oils, in return for East Germany exports of potash, machinery and tools, chemical and pharmaceutical products, metal products, crystal and ceramic articles, automotive vehicles, textiles, paper and paper products, etc.

An additional trade protocol between the Netherlands and East Germany was concluded at the Spring 1955 Leipzig Fair, providing for a 50% increase in trade so that the quantity of goods to be traded now amounts to some \$9.4 million in each direction. The goods are essentially the same as provided for under the previous agreement.

A new 1955 trade agreement between the Netherlands and Hungary was signed in Budapest on January 19, 1955. The total amount of goods to be traded was not indicated. Among the more important Dutch exports were linseed, flower seeds, etc. (\$263,200), essential oils (\$131,600), pharmaceutical and chemical products (\$263,200), tin solder and printing type (\$78,900), electrical and radio equipment and replacement parts (\$131,600), hides and leather (\$105,300), butter, lard, dyes, rubber footwear, cork, etc. Hungarian exports include horses for slaughter (\$131,600), horticultural and fodder seeds (\$263,200), oil seeds (\$526,300), edible oil (\$1,184,200), cattle for slaughter (\$131,600), essential oils (\$131,600), furs and leather (\$237,000), textiles, clothing, and textile handicraft items (\$329,000), chemical and pharmaceutical products and raw materials (\$118,000), rice (2,000 metric tons), miscellaneous luxury food products, bicycle parts (\$210,500), electrical and radio equipment, instruments, appliances and parts (\$184,200), electrical machinery and machine tools (\$263,200), hardware, motorcycles, etc.

The most recent Dutch-Soviet trade protocol was signed on April 28, 1954, scheduled to run until the end of the year, and calling for Dutch exports of salted herrings (15,000 tons), butter (15,000 tons), cheese (3,000 tons), animal fat (5,000 tons), meat (10,000 tons), rayon staple fiber (2,000 tons), spices, leather, ships (including 3 cargo ships of 6,500 tons each and 14 refrigerator ships of 2,000 tons each, 5 dredgers of 435 h.p.), pharmaceuticals, etc. The USSR, in turn pledged to export: wheat (60-120,000 tons), other grain (50,000 tons), raw cotton

* For details of the Italo-Bulgarian commercial agreement, see NBIC, January 1954.

** United Nations.

(8,000 tons), kola phosphates (40,000 tons), coal-tar pitch (25,000 tons), gas oil (40,000 tons), manganese ore (40,000 tons), sawed timber, automotive vehicles and replacement parts, canned fish, essential oils, plywood, cellulose, anthracite coal (50,000 tons), etc. The only more recent information concerning Dutch-Soviet trade relations was a November 14, 1954 New York Times report stating that a two-man mission representing 130 Dutch industries was scheduled to leave for Moscow November 22 to try to promote increased trade in non-strategic goods between the Soviet Union and the Netherlands.

Norway

Norway's Soviet bloc trade increased somewhat during 1954, exports showing a substantial rise from \$32.9 million or 6.5% of total 1953 exports to \$45.1 million or 7.7% of total 1954 exports. Imports rose slightly, but their relative importance declined. Soviet bloc imports were \$43.9 million or 4.8% of 1953 imports; in 1954 they were some \$44.2 million or 4.3% of total.

Norwegian-Bulgarian trade is carried on through private compensation agreements, the most recent of which was concluded on April 16, 1954 and is valid through July 30, 1955. It calls for exchange of \$140,000 of goods in each direction. It was negotiated by *Norsk Kompensasjonsselskap* (a cooperative group of Norwegian exporters)

IN March 1954 a mixed Rumanian-Austrian Committee, provided for under the bilateral trade and payment agreement, met in Bucharest. Following the negotiations, a new protocol was signed, establishing the list of goods to be exchanged in 1954.

The photo shows the signing of the protocol. Dr. Kurt Enderl, Legation Councillor of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (left), is signing for Austria and Leon Cojan, Director ad-interim of the directorate for trade relations with the Western countries of the Foreign Trade Ministry, is signing for the R.P.R.



and *Raznoizuos* (a Bulgarian general merchandise export company), as well as other Bulgarian foreign trade enterprises.

On December 14, 1954, Norway and Czechoslovakia signed a trade agreement covering 1955, concerning trade of about \$8 million each way as compared to \$7.4 million for 1954. Czechoslovakia will ship slightly more to Norway than she receives; the difference will cover Norwegian transport costs. Norway is to export fresh fish (18,500 tons), canned fish (\$350,000), marine fats and oils (10,000 tons), pyrites (15,000 tons), iron ore (30,000 tons), ferro-alloys (2,000 tons), etc. for Czechoslovak machinery, instruments, automotive vehicles, motorcycles, and replacement parts (\$1,358,000), crystal, ceramics, textiles (\$910,000), sugar (35,000 tons), etc.

The most recent Norwegian-Hungarian trade agreement was signed on March 19, 1954, covering the period from February 1, 1954 to January 31, 1955, and providing for mutual exchange of \$2.8 million of goods. Norway pledged delivery of fish, fish meal, marine fats and oils, hides, timber, rayon staple fiber, ferro-alloys, pig iron, chemicals, cellulose, newsprint, etc. in return for Hungarian sugar, motorcycles, sewing machines, textiles, clothing, farm products, etc.

On May 18, 1954, a Norwegian-Romanian trade and payments agreement was signed, valid to May 31, 1955, and calling for mutual exchange of \$2.8 million of goods.



UNTIL recently, there were no trade relations between Rumania and Iceland. The signing of a trade and payment protocol between the R.P.R. and Iceland has now set the basis for advantageous commercial exchanges which, through the care of both parties, will be expanded year by year.

The photo shows the signing of the protocol by Mr. Christinn Gudmunson, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iceland, (right) and Milea Vulib, Director in the Ministry of Foreign Trade of the R.P.R. and leader of the economic delegation in Reykjavik, (left).

Romanian Foreign Trade (Bucharest), August 1954.

Norway pledged, among others, rayon staple fiber (\$1,200,000), margarine, fish, ferro-alloys, marine fats and oils, paper, etc. for Romanian grain (\$400,000), petroleum products (\$1,400,000), industrial equipment, tractors, chemicals, fruit and vegetables, etc. This agreement was extended to May 31, 1956, the principal change is a 35% increase of value of goods exchanged to approximately \$3.8 million.

The 1954 Norwegian-Soviet trade protocol was signed on January 1, 1954, valid for one year, and providing for an exchange of \$28 million of goods. Norway agreed to deliver fish (56,000 tons), rayon staple fiber (1,000 tons), aluminum (2,000 tons), hardened fats (25,000 tons), calcium carbide (1,500 tons), etc. for Soviet grain (105,000 tons), fodder cake (45,000 tons), manganese (30,000 tons), chrome ores (7,500 tons), automotive vehicles (2,000 units), crude phosphates (20,000 tons), etc. A November 6, 1954, Oslo report revealed that the Norwegians are considering placing their trade with the USSR on a long-term basis. However, a new agreement signed on May 23, 1955, is valid for this year. The value of goods exchanged was increased to \$33.7 million, the type of goods traded remaining basically the same, though the Soviets agreed to deliver fuel oil. Moreover, wheat will continue to be reexported by Norway to West-Germany, under a switch transaction, in return for German automotive vehicles.

Sweden

Until recently, the majority of Swedish-Soviet bloc trade was conducted through SUKAB (*Svenska Utrikes-handels Kompensations Aktiebolaget*), a semi-official Swedish limited company for compensation foreign trade. It received a fee of 2% of the Swedish CIF export value of all Swedish products exported to the Soviet bloc. Recently, however, a number of Soviet bloc countries have bypassed SUKAB and dealt directly with the Swedish government and individual Swedish concerns, in order to save the SUKAB commission payment.

Sweden's Soviet bloc trade showed a slight increase during 1954: exports fell from \$69.6 million or 4.7% of total 1953 exports to \$67.1 million or 4.2% of the 1954 total, and imports from the bloc rose from \$61.3 million 3.9% of total 1953 imports to \$71.9 million or 4% of the 1954 total.*

On March 15, 1955 Sweden and Bulgaria signed their first trade and payments agreement since 1947, valid from April 1, 1955 to March 31, 1956, and providing for mutual exchange of goods of some \$1.9 million. Sweden is to supply steel, ball bearings, resistance wire, cellulose, rayon staple fiber, paper, machinery and replacement parts, and fish in return for Bulgarian corn, vetch, sheepskins, and other agricultural products. A special treaty provision provides for additional Bulgarian shipments of \$52,000 worth of goods to indemnify the Swedes for property nationalized

in Bulgaria and for previous trade deficits. Prior to this agreement, trade between Sweden and Bulgaria was conducted only in the form of private barter agreements through SUKAB. In November 1954, it was reported that Bulgaria's balance of payments position was so bad that it could not even raise \$97,000 in hard currencies to pay Sweden for a geological drill previously ordered and badly needed. Now that trade relations between Sweden and Bulgaria have been normalized, SUKAB will no longer act as the middle-man.

Swedish-Czechoslovak trade relations went through a series of crises during the past year. The formal Swedish-Czech trade agreement ended in February 1954, with exchange of goods since that time continuing on a loose, pay-as-you-go basis. One feature of this continued exchange of goods was that 50 percent of all Czechoslovak deliveries were used to pay off Czechoslovakia's \$1.4 million debt to Sweden. This debt, previously as high as \$5.8 million, was incurred by the CSR in the two years of trade with Sweden prior to February 1954. A further clause in the trade treaty stipulated that if the Czechoslovaks did not pay off their debt by February 1955, the balance would have to be paid in gold. Swedish-Czech negotiations for a new trade treaty began as early as January 1954 and continued through September. No agreement could be concluded, however, because Czechoslovakia obstinately refused to indemnify Swedish citizens for property nationalized in Czechoslovakia. Secondly, Czechoslovakia demanded such first-class goods from Sweden as iron ore, steel, sulphate, and sulphite cellulose, while they were only willing to offer such "second-class" items in return as glassware, ceramics, kaolin, etc. On the other hand, the Swedes desired special machinery from the Skoda plant.

In March 1954, the Czechoslovak trade attache approached the Swedish authorities and convinced them of the advantages of carrying on trade outside the compensation arrangement, and a 50-50 reimbursement agreement was negotiated. At the same time, Czechoslovaks were given the right to approach Swedish dealers directly, bypassing SUKAB. The result was that business between Czechoslovakia and Sweden boomed and the Czechoslovak debt to Sweden was substantially reduced. The Czechoslovak legation then overzealously issued import licenses to Swedish exporters, and last August Swedish authorities clamped down by requiring that every import license to Czechoslovakia be approved by a joint committee, consisting of representatives of the Bank of Sweden and the State Trade Commission. Trade between Czechoslovakia and Sweden became increasingly difficult and in retaliation on December 9, the Czechoslovak government, without warning, stopped issuance of export licenses to Sweden. Trade was at a virtual standstill until February 8 of this year when the Czechoslovaks paid the balance of their clearing debt and exchanges were resumed on a mutual compensation basis. From February to the end of March, Sweden exported iron ore, metal-processing machinery, and fish to Czechoslovakia in return for industrial glass, ceramics, and sheet iron processing machinery.

* United Nations.

Another impediment to Swedish-Czechoslovak trade is the Czechoslovak failure to supply spare parts with their machinery. Receipt of replacement parts involves a delay of from six weeks to six months and Swedish industrialists, therefore, think twice before they buy any Czechoslovak machinery.

A new 1955 trade and payments agreement between Sweden and East Germany was signed in Berlin on December 11, 1954, SUKAB acting in behalf of Sweden and DIA in behalf of East Germany. As in the 1954 agreement, a \$17.1 million exchange of goods in each direction is provided for, stipulating that all goods must be delivered in full by June 30, 1956. Among the more important products pledged by Sweden are iron, steel, and semi-finished products of same (\$2,318,000), lumber and timber (\$869,000), hides (\$483,000), shoes and upper leather (\$251,000), woolen textiles (\$386,000), cellulose, paper, and paper products (\$1,014,000), fish (\$830,000), butter (\$2,647,000), cheese (\$386,000), eggs and egg products (\$522,000), and tanning materials (\$483,000), in return for East German brown coal briquettes (\$1,280,000), potash (\$3,671,000), chemical fertilizer (\$966,000), machinery (\$328,000), automotive vehicles and replacement parts (\$2,512,000), musical instruments (\$831,000), porcelain and chinaware (\$483,000), laboratory instruments and glassware (\$425,000), textiles (\$2,125,000), chemicals (\$1,642,000), typewriters (\$193,000), etc.

The US Department of Commerce reported on January 25, 1955 that the trade and payments agreement between Sweden and Hungary, which had expired on September 30, 1954, was renewed for another 12 months without changes in the previous agreement which provided, among other things, that 10% of Swedish payments to Hungary were to be used for amortization of Hungary's debt arising from nationalization of Swedish property. The agreement provides for Swedish exports of some \$3.8 million and Hungarian exports of \$4.4 million. Among the principal products pledged by Sweden were iron ore, ferro-alloys, steel, tools, ball-bearings, rayon staple fiber in return for, Hungarian fresh fruit, feathers, alkaloids, other pharmaceutical raw materials, metal-working machinery, electrical and radio equipment and parts, textiles (\$1,500,000), etc.

An interesting facet of Swedish-Hungarian trade relations is that the Hungarian government still owns the chief interest in two radio and electric bulb factories in Sweden. These firms, "Tungsram" and "Orion" are branches of Hungarian factories. Certain prefabricated parts, such as radio tubes and the metal frames for electric bulbs, are manufactured in Hungary. Because of delayed delivery of metal parts from Hungary, these factories have been losing their Swedish market.

On February 9, 10, and 11, SUKAB received telegrams from Sofia and Budapest cancelling the standing Bulgarian and Hungarian offers of corn, barley, oil cake, soya oil, and manganese ore. Hitherto, both countries had offered these articles for pounds sterling. It is believed that the necessity of providing for the home market under the New Course program was the principal motive for cancellation.



Polish Foreign Trade (Warsaw), No. 21, 1954.

Nevertheless, Bulgaria, for one, has agreed to supply corn and oil cake under the terms of her recently-concluded trade agreement.

After three months of tedious and difficult negotiations, Sweden and Poland finally reached an agreement on exchange of goods between May 1, 1954, and April 30, 1955, in Stockholm on May 16, 1954, providing for payment of some \$12.5 million worth of Polish debts which had accrued from the previous year's trade. The exact amount of goods to be traded was not stipulated. Sweden agreed to deliver iron ore (500,000 tons), machinery and replacement parts (\$2.1 million), iron and steel (\$328,000), fish (1,000 tons), etc., in return for Polish coal (1,500,000 tons), chemicals (\$580,000), coal and graphite electrodes (\$193,000), oak and beechwood (6,000 cu. meters), textiles (\$483,000), etc. As part of the deal, Sweden granted Poland a \$2.9 million credit, nearly \$1 million less than the credit granted under the previous agreement. Several other significant differences exist between this agreement and the prior one: previously, the amount of coal agreed upon was 2.2 million tons or 700,000 tons more than that

called for in this agreement.* The principal reason for decrease in Swedish coal imports is the rise in Polish coal prices. Most important Swedish buyers of Polish coal are abandoning coal and switching to oil. For example "Cellulossbolaget," formerly chief Swedish buyer of Polish coal, which used to purchase 200,000 tons annually, purchased none in 1954 and is now running its enterprise entirely on oil. The importance of coal in Polish-Swedish trade cannot be overemphasized: during 1954, coal accounted for nearly 87% of Swedish imports from Poland by value. At present, Sweden is buying considerable quantities of coal from the United States. Despite the high rate of exchange and substantial freight charges, American coal is still slightly cheaper than Polish coal.

Another fundamental difference between last year's treaty and the prior one is that the amount of iron ore pledged by Sweden was decreased from 735,000 tons to 500,000. On the other hand, Sweden's deliveries of machinery were to increase from \$1.7 million to \$2.1 million. Recent Stockholm reports indicate that the Poles are very eager to increase imports from Sweden. They are particularly interested in importing high-grade steel, tools, machinery, precision instruments, ball-bearings, etc. Further, Poland would like to buy transit goods (articles imported by Sweden for processing) such as cork and rubber articles, but Poland has little to offer in return. Its textiles are priced 15% above those domestically produced; its tractors are reported to be overpriced and too weak and too small for Swedish requirements; and the 3-ton Polish trucks are reportedly priced 30% above a 3-ton Chevrolet.

Sweden's trade with Romania is principally conducted on the basis of private compensation deals negotiated through SUKAB. During 1954, compensation deals totaling \$445,000 in each direction were agreed upon. Romania needs Swedish machine tools badly and is therefore anxious to develop trade relations but, other than petroleum products, has little to sell which might tempt the Swedes.

On February 3, 1954, Sweden concluded a \$30 to \$40 million mutual trade protocol with the USSR. Sweden agreed to deliver herrings (2,000 tons), butter (5,000 tons), paper and cardboard (10,000 tons), rayon staple fiber (5,000 tons), iron and steel, 20 fishing trawlers (1,200 tons each), and 5 small refrigerated ships to be delivered 1954-56, industrial equipment, and machinery, etc. in return for Soviet corn (10,000 tons), oil cakes (30,000 tons), tobacco, cotton, petroleum and petroleum products (600,000 tons), chrome ore (20,000 tons), manganese ore (15,000 tons), automotive vehicles (\$580,000), silver, tulou, benzol, coal, etc. The protocol was expanded on September 7, 1954, so Sweden is to ship an additional 9 steel fishing trawlers, refrigerator ships (\$8,685,000), electrical equipment and machinery for the food industry (\$1,930,000). In return, the USSR raised its 300,000 tons anticipated petroleum deliveries to 900,000 tons, and its cotton deliveries to 1,100 tons. Other quotas under the supplementary protocol were tulou (1,000 tons), titanium

dioxide (100 tons), nickel (100 tons), and bran (5,000 tons).

On April 22, 1955, Radio Stockholm announced that the 1955 Swedish-Soviet trade agreement had been signed under which Swedish shipments to the USSR are to be cut considerably because the Soviets have pending a backlog of \$10 million in unpaid orders particularly for ships. The list of Swedish exports has, in part, a new composition. Included are leather and hides (\$1,900,000), iron and steel (\$1,400,000), electric power equipment (\$675,000), equipment for consumer goods industries (\$619,000), viscose pulp and paper, etc. Soviet shipments are to be \$20-24 million. The agreement provides for a quota of only 600,000 tons of Soviet petroleum to be delivered, the same amount as under the original 1954 agreement. It does, however, provide for increasing this quantity if necessary. Swedish sources say that actual imports may approach one million tons before the year is out. Other Soviet exports include manganese and chrome ore, oil cake, corn, cotton, zinc and coal.

Switzerland

The overall volume and importance of Swiss trade with the Soviet bloc has declined slightly in the past year from \$60.8 million or 5% of total 1953 exports to \$59.1 million or 4.8% of total 1954 exports. Similarly, imports fell from \$50.7 million or 4.3% of total 1953 imports to \$49.4 million or 3.7% of the 1954 total.

On November 26, 1954, a new trade and payment agreement was concluded in Sofia between Switzerland and Bulgaria, valid from May 10, 1955, through December 31, 1955, and granting most-favored nation status between the two countries. All trade is to be on a mutual clearing basis. Swiss products include machinery and equipment, non-ferrous metals, cable, ball bearings, aniline dyes, watches and replacement parts, rayon staple fibers, pharmaceutical and chemical products in return for some \$4.9 million of Bulgarian tobacco, eggs, hides, raw silk yarn, feathers, herbs, carpets, grains, poultry, fodder, miscellaneous foods, etc. Some 7% of Bulgarian payments go into a special account to reimburse former Swiss owners of property nationalized by Bulgaria.

On May 24, 1954, a protocol was signed in Prague covering trade between Czechoslovakia and Switzerland from April 1, 1954, to March 31, 1955, and recently renewed for another year, providing for Swiss exports of some \$13 million and Czechoslovak exports of some \$16.5 million. The trade differential is to be used to reduce debts in Switzerland which Czechoslovakia has accrued from underfulfillment of previous trade obligations and from expropriation of Swiss properties. Approximately two-thirds of Swiss exports will be chemicals and machinery. Other exports will include apples, livestock, watches, cheese, textiles and ball bearings, in return for Czechoslovak deliveries of sugar, malt, hops, automotive vehicles, motorcycles, textiles, glass, ceramics, chemical and wood products, etc. Unlike previous years, Czechoslovakia has not pledged

* It is estimated that Polish coal shipments under this treaty will amount to no more than one million tons.

coal and coke exports and the amount of metal and iron products pledged has slowly dwindled.

Polish-Swiss trade has fallen substantially during recent years and negotiations have been relatively unsuccessful because the major products the Swiss want are grains, which the Poles are unable to export, and coal, for which Poland is asking \$25 a ton, 15 to 20% more than the prevailing world market price. Moreover, the Swiss are not sure they can dispose of the 325,000 tons of coal annually offered by Poland. The Poles are exploring the possibility of replacing coal exports with other types of goods such as carbon and graphite electrodes which Swiss industry needs. They have also offered to raise their farm exports but these transactions cannot replace the value of previous years' coal transactions.

The fact that negotiations are at a virtual standstill has created much ill-feeling in Switzerland since the present compensation system for Swiss property nationalized by the Poles is included in the previous coal agreement. These indemnities, originally fixed at \$35 million, have been reduced by mutual agreement to about \$12 million, but the Swiss want that paid in gold or in foreign currencies. Present feeling in Switzerland is that the Poles are asking higher prices for coal to force the Swiss to pay themselves for their own nationalized properties. Although the Poles now have a favorable credit balance, it only covers a fraction of the funds desired for purchase of Swiss machinery. Moreover, the Swiss are adamant about not granting the Poles credits and have advised them to seek credits from countries to which they export grain.

United Kingdom

Great Britain's Soviet bloc trade has expanded somewhat in the past year. Exports to the Communist countries increased from \$92.7 million or 1.2% of total 1953 exports to \$115.3 million or 1.5% of the 1954 total. Imports from the orbit declined slightly from \$235.6 million or 2.5% of total 1953 imports to \$231.7 million or 2.4% in 1954.

On August 19, 1954, the UK and Hungary signed a trade agreement for \$14 million of British exports and \$15.4 million of Hungarian exports, the first trade or financial contract since 1949, when British-Hungarian relations were broken off because of the imprisonment of British businessman Edgar Sanders. The agreement, valid for one year from September 1, 1954, calls for British export of wool tops, rayon yarns, pharmaceutical products, machinery, automotive vehicles, tin plate, and electrical equipment in exchange for Hungarian tomato puree, rice, eggs, canned meat, hog bristles, and manufactured goods. It also provides for financial negotiations on settlement of all outstanding Hungarian debts to the UK on or before September 1, 1955.

A trade agreement between the UK and Poland was signed on November 11, 1954, covering trade from 1954 to 1956. The first protocol called for exchange of \$2.8 million worth of goods by the end of 1954, but to extend through 1955 if necessary. Among the UK goods to be shipped are herring, cotton yarn, wool, chemicals,



Caption: Two new washing machines, Perota (left) and Perobot, both made in Slovakia.

Czechoslovak Life (Prague), March 1955

automotive vehicles, tin and tropical products such as rubber and cocoa. In return, Poland is to supply bacon, eggs, paper, chemicals and timber. Poland wanted all sorts of machinery, much of it on the strategic list, but in spite of offers to increase trade substantially, Britain refused to lift the restrictions. Poland is likely to purchase only food-processing and brewery equipment. Financial settlement was also made of Polish debts to the UK resulting from expropriation of British properties and for State and private debts guaranteed by the Poles. Final settlement called for Polish payments of \$15.3 million over a ten-year period.

During the past year, the USSR has conducted an intensive campaign in the United Kingdom to increase trade between the two countries and designed to break down all Western restrictions on deliveries of strategic materials. They feel that if British controls are relaxed the rest of Western Europe will automatically fall in line. Several significant events have taken place in regard to this campaign. In February 1954, a group of 33 British businessmen visiting Moscow were advised that the Soviet Union was interested in purchasing \$1.12 billion worth of British equipment in the period 1955-57, among which goods were shipping, including fishing trawlers, cargo vessels, and whalers (\$350,000,000); power equipment (\$140,000,000); machine tools, forging equipment, and presses (\$84,000,000); machinery for the textile and food processing industries (\$84,000,000); food, raw materials, and consumer goods (\$364,000,000); a steel rolling mill (\$28,000,000); floating docks, railway equipment, steam boilers, etc. Of the \$112 million worth of firm orders taken, \$56 million worth was immediately approved by the British Board of Trade since no strategic materials were involved. Of this amount, \$19.6 million was for textile machinery and \$2.8

million was for milk-bottling machinery. In August, the Board of Trade approved the licensing of an additional \$14 million worth of goods. According to an unofficial British estimate in February 1955, a total of approximately \$84 million worth of the original \$112 million had been approved by that date. Among other orders reportedly approved were those for electrical equipment including diesel generating sets, woodworking machinery, machine tools, and fabricated cable and wire. The Soviet program received a setback in March of this year when Moscow cancelled a substantial portion of their orders for British consumer goods and consumer goods machinery. Authoritative sources valued these cancelled orders at about \$12.6 million. The move was a severe jolt to those British manufacturers and exporters who had anticipated a vast increase in Soviet trade.

The UK announced in July 1954, that it had authorized construction of 20 trawlers for the Soviets, and also stated that possible construction of a freighter was under consideration. This problem was further discussed by Soviet Ambassador to Great Britain, Jacob Malik, at the opening of the British-Soviet friendship exhibition in Birmingham on November 22, 1954. He declared that the Soviet Union wishes to purchase cargo ships that can travel 15 knots, while Soviet purchasers can obtain ships capable of only 12 knots. On January 20, 1955, the British Admiralty announced that henceforth British naval shipyards were authorized to build dredgers for Soviet bloc countries, and on March 16 it was announced that the shipyards were free to accept Soviet bloc orders "save for a few types of strategic importance."

On the import side one of the most significant events during the year was the March 16, 1954 Board of Trade announcement that it had granted an import license for the first Soviet oil to come to Britain since before the war, a consignment of 3,000 tons of high-grade Baku lubricating oil.

Greatly concerned over adverse criticism of its Soviet bloc in the United States, the British government issued a statement outlining its position on the matter in August 1954, stating:

"In considering trade with communist countries, Britain

draws a clear distinction between trade in 'civilian' products, and trade in warlike or strategic products. She bans the export of warlike or strategic goods because she has no wish to help the military programs of countries that are actually or potentially hostile. She does, however, encourage civilian trade because her economy needs a high level of trade to function properly. . . ."

Patterns and Conclusions

The trade of the thirteen West European countries with the Soviet bloc has expanded substantially during the past year.* Exports increased 22.1%, from \$838 million in 1953, to \$1,023.3 million in 1954, while imports increased 13.9%, from \$947.1 million in 1953 to \$1,079.1 million in 1954. It should be borne in mind, however, that the 1952 trade turnover between East and West was somewhat larger than in 1953 and therefore, compared to 1952, exports have increased only 15.7% and imports 9.4%.

Certain changes are evident in the character of the Soviet bloc's trade offensive of the past year. Wherever possible, private compensation agreements are being replaced by formal trade treaties. Recent trade agreements call for increased Western shipments of such strategic materials as ball bearings, machine tools, ships, high-grade steel and alloys, and chemicals. The Communist countries are still using foreign trade as a political as well as an economic lever in Western Europe by purchasing such agricultural surpluses for which the market is shrinking as dairy products from Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands, wine from France and Italy, almonds from Italy, and fish from Norway, Sweden and Iceland. These purchases serve a dual purpose: they permit the Communist regimes to bolster the domestic supply of these food products while they are in the midst of a farm and food crisis; and at the same time, gives the Western countries a foreign market for products for which sales are diminishing.**

* The difficulties of accurately computing the statistics of West European trade with Communist China explains the exclusion of that trade from the overall total.

** This program is even more noticeable in underdeveloped areas where agricultural products play a more important role.

Bath Officials in Hot Water

According to a recent number of the Bulgarian Party paper *Otechestven Front*, public baths have not met their quota, even though "more money than necessary" had been invested in these facilities. The paper scored officials for having converted public baths into a public danger and explained that "local authorities often divert funds intended for baths to other purposes." According to *Otechestven Front*, people are reluctant to patronize the new facilities because the following conditions now prevail: in one district persons emerged from the bath house with their hair rigidly upright because there was too much calcium in the water; in another town bathers were injured when hit by plaster falling from the ceiling into the tub, and in yet another locality prospective bathers had to freeze because defective boilers warmed neither the water nor the rooms.

Movies for the Masses

"The film-goer is waiting for comedies devoted to questions of life and witty, musical comedies, elegant in form, which for some reason have disappeared from the screen and which have not appeared for a decade. And why have we no poetical, lyrical comedies on entertaining subjects, devoted to themes of love, friendship and the family?"

Pravda (Moscow), May 4, 1953

"The Party has sharply condemned any display of carelessness in relation to the ideological political contents and artistic features of films. . . . Not enough attention has been paid to the 'hero of our time,' the common Soviet man. . . . The number of films produced must increase and reflect the great problems which are being solved by the people through their creative work."

Leningradskaya Pravda, September 4, 1954

IN SEPTEMBER 1946, Moscow's *Pravda* issued a blast "Against False and Empty Films." It made the basic point that "Soviet cinematic art has not and cannot have any interests or tasks other than the interests of the State and the tasks of educating the people, and the youth particularly, in the spirit of the great ideas of Lenin and Stalin," and so revealed the essential dilemma of Communist cinematography: art versus propaganda. The best of all art forms for molding mass public opinion—the moving picture—has failed to live up to Communist expectations. After a beginning with Eisenstein and Pudovkin, the Communist commissars of culture have virtually managed to destroy cinematic art—both artistically and productively—by large doses of ideological poison. The fact that the people in the Soviet orbit must be forced to go to moving pictures, and their attitude toward them—a combination of disinterest, dissatisfaction and disbelief—are the clearest indications of that destruction and of the failure of regime-directed cinematography to "draw the necessary lessons and conclusions."

Plans for developing their domestic film industries and, simultaneously, increasing the size of movie audiences, are underway in all the Satellites as prerequisites for success of



Jozef Nowak in the role of Szczesny in the movie *Cellulose*.

Kwartalnik Filmowy (Warsaw), No. 3-4, 1954

their indoctrination program. War damage to the film industries in Hungary and Poland was considerable, and even now, more than ten years after the war, production is below that of the 1930s. Czechoslovakia was more fortunate: its film studios, the largest in the area before the war, were used and expanded by the Nazis, with the result that it now has the highest production in Eastern Europe. Whereas Czechoslovakia now turns out as many as 22 feature films yearly, Hungary produces from 10-12, and Poland approximately 8. Romania's production appears to be below that of Poland, and Bulgaria, with the newest industry in the area, is trying to achieve a yearly average of 3-4 feature films. Satellite plans for expansion are therefore considered of utmost importance. According to *Kwartalnik Filmowy* (Warsaw) Nos. 3-4, 1954, Polish goals for feature film production are to "increase the productive capacity of the standard film production base from the average of five films per year in 1952-53 to 10 films in 1957, 19 in 1959, and 30 in 1960."

The Communists are also attempting to improve theater facilities, eliminate technical shortcomings and increase the number of films distributed. By removing technical inconveniences, they aim at making films a more popular form

of diversion and, more important, a more attractive and efficient form of indoctrination. Thus, *Informatia Bucurestiului*, July 30, 1954, voiced its concern with theater shortcomings in an article entitled "Surprise Raid on Bucharest Cinemas": "Newsreels are usually late, thus delaying performances from ten to twenty minutes; not all theaters observe the scheduled performance system; the I.C. Frimu theater has a leaking roof, which annoys patrons seated in the middle rows when it rains." And *Literaturen Front* (Sofia) issued a typical complaint when it said on January 21, 1954: "There are many cinemas like *Kultura* in Stalin City, where bad projection and indistinct sound tracks justifiably provoke the indignation of the working people. In many cinemas, the screens are soiled and have become yellowish."

Whereas the Czechoslovak press recently announced plans to replace obsolete machinery and improve interior decoration in movie theaters, the Polish government focussed on more variety in film distribution. *Przegląd Kulturalny* (Warsaw), February 3-9, complained that 1954 was a thin year for cinema spectators, and that the average number of premieres did not exceed five films per month. "Without taking into account filmed theater performances, short features, and re-issues, only about 60 new films were shown on the Polish screen in 1954. Even though the Central Film Office gave us more new films than in the catastrophic year of 1953, spectators had a right to expect more variety." While this commentary reflects a concern for more entertainment and applies chiefly to feature films produced in the West as well as in the East, the Bulgarian press, making similar demands, recently insisted on more variety and better distribution of documentaries for the "Socialist re-education of the masses." The newspaper complained that a film on textile production was recently shown in a city consisting largely of lumber workers, and claimed that the people's "wide range of interests" was not satisfied by the current film selection.

Since the war, the Communists have made great efforts

to increase the number of movie theaters, particularly in rural areas where the indoctrination program has presented the greatest difficulties. Citing Czechoslovak accomplishments, *Lidova Demokracie* (Prague), December 7, 1954, claimed that the country now has about 3,500 permanent movie theaters as compared with 1,838 at the end of 1937. Similarly, while approximately 84 million persons attended movie performances in 1937, this figure had increased to 143 million in 1953. The Bulgarian newspaper *Trud* (Sofia), August 27, 1954, announced that the country now has 1,272 movie theaters as compared with 213 in 1944; of this total 884 are in the rural areas. As for audiences, *Trud* claimed that at the end of 1953, there were 60,200,000 moviegoers as compared with 17,000,000 in 1947. And *Otechestven Front* (Sofia), May 23, 1954, stated that in the Second Five Year Plan, the number of cinemas must increase by 27 percent.

In Poland, Radio Warsaw, March 8, 1955, provided the information that in 1954 cinema audiences rose to 165 million, which represented a nine percent increase over 1953. Of this total, 38 million were rural audiences. And in Hungary, *Magyar Nemzet* (Budapest), January 6, 1955, claimed that in 1953 there were 70.8 million moviegoers, and in 1954, 96 million.* It is probable that both regimes plan even greater increases in 1955.

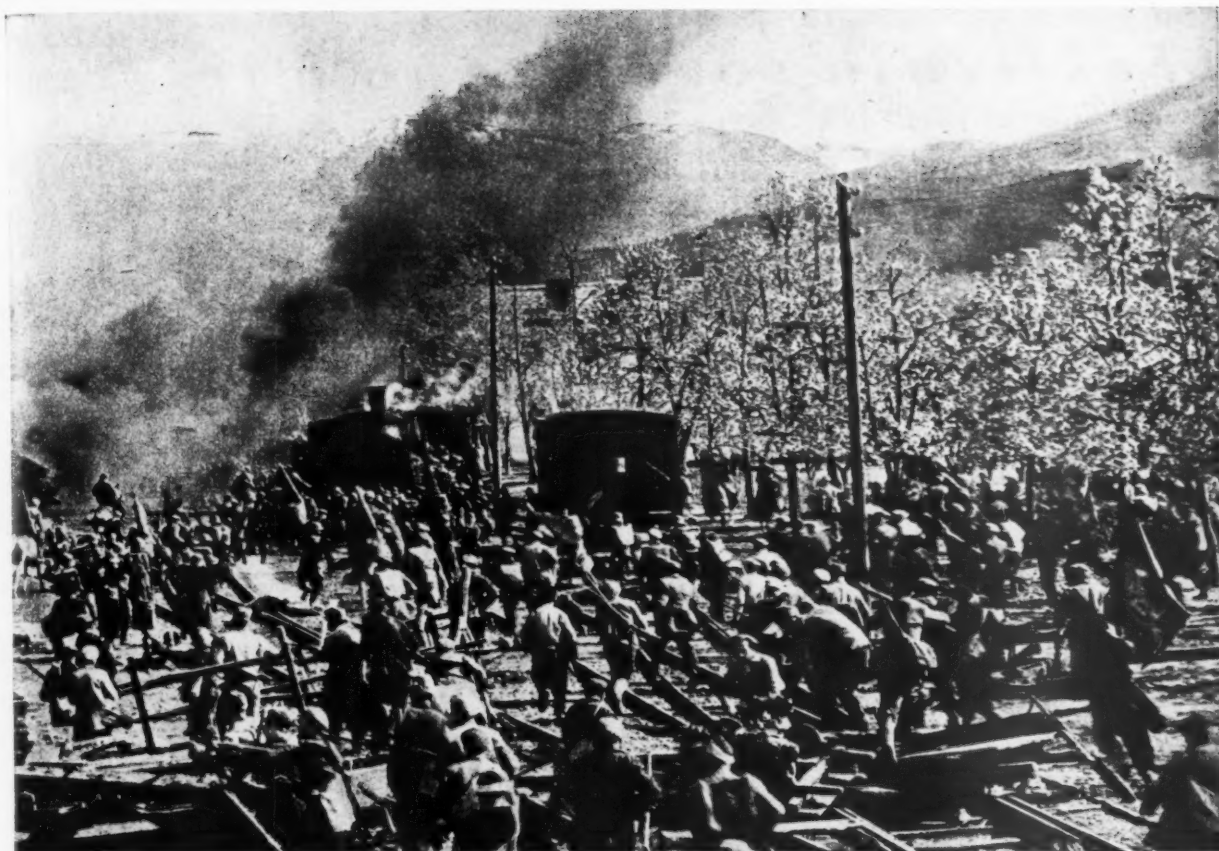
While the number of moviegoers has increased substantially since the war, it is necessary to point out that attendance is not always voluntary and that the statistics quoted above are unreliable for that reason. On farms and in factories, for example, pressure is intense, and it is likely that the number of spectators viewing documentaries would be negligible were it not for the work of Party propa-

* The figures given both in Hungary and Bulgaria probably include showings of 16 mm. films, which comprise the largest proportion of films shown in rural areas and Houses of Culture. In the 1954 budget published in *Szabad Nep*, June 17, 1954, the number of cinema goers was listed as 23.3 million. In Bulgaria, another issue of the regime press listed the number as approximately 40 million.



Caption: Left—"The revolt flared up most strongly in Northwestern Bulgaria under the leadership of Georgi Dimitrov and Vasil Kolarov. They are represented in the picture by prizewinners Asparuch Temelkov and Boris Ganchev." Right—"The legendary figure of the people's revolt was Pope Andrei from Medkovce. With a single gun, his revolutionary group defeated military units near Buzarce. Pope Andrei is acted by Ivan Bratanov."

Kino (Prague), December 8, 1954



Caption: "The film *September Heroes* was awarded the Struggle for Freedom prize at the Eighth Film Festival at Karoly Vary for its artistically effective presentation of the Bulgarian people's heroic revolt against Fascism in the twenties."

Kino (Prague), December 8, 1954

gandists. *Otechestven Front* (Sofia), provided a clue to Communist efforts in this direction when it complained on September 24, 1954, that a number of cinemas do not fulfill their plans for audiences and that in 1953 plans for showing 3,313 films were not carried out. *Literaturn Front* (Sofia), January 21, 1954, stated that cinema managements in rural areas manifest a deplorable lack of concern for the fact that "films are attended by only a small percentage of the rural population. . . . Measures are not taken for the removal of weaknesses in the work of cinemas as well as for the arbitrary discontinuance of film projects. In the Plovdiv district alone, the cinemas of 17 villages are inactive."

And to quote a final illustration of Communist agitation efforts, *Vecherni Novini* (Sofia) announced that over 14,000 movie organizations help in mass cultural work for cinemas, the main task being to "organize spectators for collective attendance." The newspaper complained, however, that in some places these organizations "exist formally:" "While at the beginning of last year, the number of spectators collectively attending films in the Blagoev Theater [in Sofia] was 18 percent of the general number,

towards the end of the year only eleven percent attended. At a number of places, trade union organizations work formally in selecting movie organizers and do not replace those who are unsuitable."

A Matter of Art

While more theaters, improved facilities, increased film production and intense agitation work can be depended upon to ensure the growth of movie audiences, the Communists realize that the only way to attract large numbers of enthusiastic and voluntary moviegoers is to produce better quality films. Although the movies have long been considered the most important medium for imbuing the masses with Marxist ideology, it has become increasingly apparent that ideology alone will not do the trick, that the public remains impervious to unaesthetic doses of dogma, and that the masses insist above all on entertainment and human interest in their movies and will be satisfied with nothing less. To ignore the public's demands would be to deprive films of their mass appeal, and the people of a form of escape from the tedium of daily life which they might strive to satisfy in other, less acceptable ways.

With the introduction of the New Course in 1953, the Communists began to show greater concern for the artistic and entertainment value of their films, and, in some countries, restrictions were eased on the type of feature films considered acceptable. Furthermore, it is possible that greater impetus was given to domestic Satellite production through the increase of free world film imports which took place in this period. Their popularity may have forced Communist film experts to recognize the fact that for the moment they were competing on a world market and that to gain influence with their people they would have to turn out a greater variety of films which compared favorably with those produced outside the orbit.

As in literature, one of the chief faults in Communist movies is "schematism," resulting largely from bureaucratic intervention. The effects of this interference are dull scripts overburdened with ideological clichés, uninspired productions which appear to have been thrown together instead of conceived by an individual director with an original technique. Although the New Course has given rise to numerous discussions and denunciations of bureaucracy, no real solution to the problem has been found so far, chiefly because the Communists remain unwilling to attack the disease at its root—that is, to permit independence and private initiative in artistic creation.

In Poland, a session of the Film Section of Theater and Film Actors last fall brought to light the fact that scenario and program sections lacked interest in their work, and that this attitude, combined with ineptitude, had been the cause of many poor films. The Director of the Central Office of Cinematography, who spoke on this occasion, also attacked bureaucratic methods of approach and "excessive political cautiousness," which, he said, resulted in constant changes of and additions to scripts, and in "declarativism, verbalism, and a tendency to be primitive." That "over-cautiousness" and bureaucracy have prevented advances in the art of cinematography was also admitted by *Slowo Powszechne* (Warsaw) October 13, 1954, which remarked:

"We want to increase the quantity and quality of screenplays, but by our ostrich-like policy and excessive interference, we discourage writers, who do not want to write according to someone else's wishes, and forever alter and correct their screenplays. As a result, hardly anything is left of their original concepts. We have spent a lot of money on bad films, and are still afraid to experiment and look for new solutions."

The superficiality caused by excessive bureaucratic interference is usually manifested in the Communist producer's failure to fuse art and ideology, and his general policy of sacrificing art to "Socialist content." Complaints about flat dialogue, crude camera work, banal plots, and lack of dramatic focus are more often than not traceable to over-zealous attempts to drown movies in Party themes. The element of characterization is usually the first to suffer from such practices. Thus, the Romanian film *Ionut's Brigade* was criticized by writer Ovid Crohmălniceanu as being typical of local productions in its use of stock characters, in its portrayal of "a saboteur, a capable engineer, kind man-ager, and skillful old foreman." Similarly, another Ro-

manian film, *The Railroad Workers*, was criticized by *Contemporanul*, April 30, 1953, as follows: "In the midst of huge engines, deafening noise and the blue lightning of welding lamps, the railroad workers themselves appear as pale figures, faded beside the violent objects which crush their personalities."

Recent analyses of film shortcomings by a Polish and a Hungarian critic were even more enlightening. Approaching the problem of cinematography from two different aspects, both writers came to similar conclusions. The Polish spokesman, Jerzy Toeplitz, in a speech to the film session last fall, declared that since the nation's second postwar film conference in March 1952* no clear progress had been made in the "artistic-ideological field." Toeplitz said that while the film industry, unlike other artistic sectors, had never tended to escape from contemporary reality and "withdraw to the safe position of historical themes," it had nevertheless left many hopes unfulfilled. Toeplitz made this charge particularly with respect to the nation's three postwar films on rural life—*Bright Fields*, *Commune* and *Difficult Love*—which, he said, were "immature" products and great disappointments:

"The artist's ideological immaturity expresses itself most frequently in his inability to create a synthesis in the form of a general, typical picture. How often, instead of this synthesis, do we see merely a simple summary of various phenomena. . . . Inability to properly select and classify the phenomena lies at the bottom of all our mistakes. . . . Failure to understand the typical, caused by our inability to carry out a proper political analysis and selection of phenomena has led many a time to superficial acceptance of them and [indifference] to the internal dramaturgy of the picture."

What Toeplitz is saying, in effect, is that movies, particularly those on the controversial subject of rural life, suffer from lack of dramatic focus, and that Party-mindedness is conveyed in the raw form of undigested Party themes, too many of which are included in an individual film at the expense of depth and artistic-ideological power. In Hungary, the same tendency towards superficiality and "primitiveness" was noted by journalist Tibor Meray in an article emphasizing that films were not a branch of literature but an independent art. Writing in *Szabad Nep* (Budapest), April 12, 1954, Meray supplemented Polish complaints about "verbalism and declarativism," when he stated that there was too much talk in Hungarian films, almost no interval when conversation was not taking place: "This means that film producers express everything by words and fail to take advantage of the specific means of expression in a movie: the picture." Meray also complained, as did Toeplitz, that scenario writers tended to clutter their scripts: "Most of our screen plays are too crowded. . . . This is the mistake of even such successful

* The first film conference in 1949 was marked by endeavors to eliminate "bourgeois remnants in films and to institute Socialist Realism." At the second film conference in 1952, Edward Ochab had pointed to errors such as superficial treatment of important problems, underestimation of the class struggle, tendencies to sweeten reality and "lack of national pride in historic gains." *Kwartalnik Filmowy* (Warsaw), Nos. 3-4, 1954.



Scene from Czechoslovak film *Punta and the Four Kids*.

Kino (Prague), November 18, 1954

films as *Little Penny*. It embraces too much, and for this reason the main plot, showing how a girl who used to be a kulak servant becomes a politically conscious worker in Sztalinvaros, was not sufficiently emphasized." In general, Meray complained about poor artistry, stating:

"In our films the individuality of the director is not sufficiently expressed. Most of our films could bear the name of either one or another of our directors. Neither are our actors always satisfactory: the manner in which

they portray characters is not deep or convincing enough [and too reminiscent of the stage]. . . . Our films are not beautiful enough. Little space is given to landscapes, nature, trees, flowers, hills. . . . Many of these mistakes may be traced back to weaknesses in our literature, to the fact that we do not give a true enough picture of reality, that we do not reveal the depth and complexity of life, that our presentation of conflicts is not sufficiently vivid. . . . Films are often shallow and idealized."

Meray blamed this chiefly on the fact that scripts are followed too literally by directors and that a large proportion of movies are simply filmed novels, stories or plays. Condemning the failure of producers and directors to act as creative artists rather than "copyists and illustrators," Meray indirectly admitted that one of the main reasons for this lack of initiative is fear of altering the "ideological message" of a script:

"The chief reason for the literary character of films is that they must convey the correct ideological ideas. The easiest way to do this is to put down what is to be said in the scenario, and if it is thus put down it is easier to control. It is clear that the ideas conveyed in a film must follow Party line; no concession can be made in this respect. On the contrary, the spirit of Party-mindedness must be intensified. *It is wrong to think that ideology and Party spirit must be expressed only in a story, in words. . . . Too much talk is inevitably accompanied by the danger of schematism.*" (Italics added)

In urging film directors to make bolder, Party-minded experiments in camera work and human interest, Meray pointed to the artistry of Italian "progressive films," using *Rome 11 O'Clock* as an example:

"[In the movie] one of the typists sits down at the boss' typewriter and begins to pick at the keyboard at a pitifully slow speed. We see the expression on the faces of three hundred girls [also applying for this one job] as they react to the sound of this typing. In some it arouses hope, in others pity, and some listen with an air of superiority. And when the spinster who types like a machine gun starts to write, the expressions on the three hundred faces change: envy, jealousy, appreciation, solidarity. . . . That is film technique! That is what we must fight for. . . . It is my impression that our film life is like stagnant water, and it seems unfortunate that this stagnant water is steeped by banks of self-complacency."

On the Screen

A survey of some of the latest feature films produced behind the Iron Curtain corroborates some of the above criticisms and provides further insight into the artistic and ideological efforts of Communist film producers. While the majority of films deal with industrial and agricultural features and policies of "Socialist" society, or the "historical development" of Communism, some attempts have been made recently to introduce greater variety into movie themes and to satisfy demands for entertainment and human interest.

In Bulgaria, where only a few feature films have been

produced so far, the release of the movie, *September Heroes*, which portrays the first Communist uprising in 1923, organized by Georgi Dimitrov and Vasil Kolarov, was accompanied by tremendous fanfare. The film, which took approximately a year and a half to make, was shot largely outdoors, and was the first experiment of its kind in the country. *Otechestven Front* (Sofia), March 28, 1954, declared that the film was conceived as a mass project "which clearly shows how the people create their own history," and went on to describe the film collective's prodigious efforts on location. Contrasting present-day Bulgaria with the "remote epoch of the twenties," the newspaper described the "historical" reconstruction of Berkovitz, a town near the Yugoslav border used as the shooting site: "A steeple had to be built, a facade of a church constructed and telephone wires hidden. One of the quarries was turned into a lead and silver mine of the epoch, with the primitive equipment and hard work conditions typical of capitalist production." *Otechestven Front* also described at length the struggle with bad weather conditions, "which gave birth to the idea of covering the town square with artificial snow," and paid tribute to the workers for their heroic attempts to complete the film on time. That *September Heroes* was a "people's film" and a mo-

mentous event in the history of Bulgarian film-making was also conveyed in the following description:

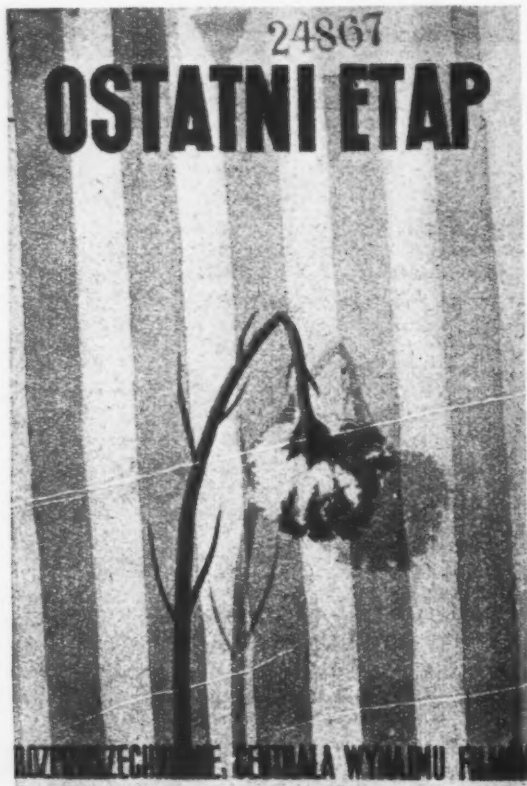
"Great heroism was manifested by the *September Heroes* collective when the mass scenes of fights for the seizure of Sredez were shot—2,000 men participated. They had 15-20 days. . . . When great enthusiasm hundreds of fighters from the People's Army and toiling peasants from the neighboring villages . . . passed from one place to another on horseback and foot and with trucks . . . and enabled impressive pictures to be taken of the rebellious people. Thus we see on the screen the magnificent pictures of these victorious struggles. We see the grandeur of the people, of their army, composed of workers and peasants, and armed less with guns and more with scythes and sticks. We see how the common people, realizing their power under the leadership of the Communist Party, go against the hateful enemy and crush it."

The aim of the film was to portray the "class dissolution" which took place after the First World War, and to depict the "historic alliance of workers and peasants," which currently is one of the main propaganda lines of the Communist regime. In summing up highlights of the film on May 14, 1954, *Rabotnichesko Delo* had only one complaint to make: the "people's leaders," Dimitrov and Kolarov, did not receive sufficient attention:

"After the Bulgarian soldiers fought for three years defending the interests of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie and German capitalism, they were faced with hunger and unemployment. . . . Another strong moment in the film is the scene of the strike, when the immortal leader Georgi Dimitrov appears. . . . The basic line of the film is the comradeship of workers and peasants. . . . The mistakes on June 9, committed by the Agrarian Union as well as the Communist Party are described. . . . The conflict which occurs between the worker Stefan and the honest peasant Petur, who have sworn to remain brothers, is also well-depicted. Until this moment, Petur believes that the Orange Army [Stamboliski's party police] defends the land and the rights of peasants, but now he understands that this army defends the capitalists who become rich on the people. . . . It should be mentioned that the spectator remains dissatisfied. . . . The film director left little room for the people's leaders. . . . It is necessary that in the future our cinematography put more thought into depicting the images of the great political figures of our time."

Poland

While the Bulgarian film industry has dealt almost exclusively with "historical subjects," Polish film producers have focussed more on contemporary themes. *The Five Boys from Barska Street*, winner of a prize at the Cannes festival and recently shown in New York, falls into this category. The movie deals with the problem of juvenile delinquency and is set in the Warsaw of 1947—a city demolished by the Nazis and in the process of being rebuilt. The movie opens when the five boys, demoralized by the war and the occupation, are brought into court on the charge of petty thievery. Confronted by the problem of mounting hooliganism, the court (presided over by a woman judge) decides to give the young men another



Film advertisement from *Swiat* (Warsaw), January 23, 1955. It advertises the film *The Last Stage*, dealing with the Auschwitz concentration camp. Background shows prisoners' striped garments and prison number.



Title of movie: *Under the City*. (Film is about Budapest subway construction, which has since been suspended).

Beke es Szabadsag (Budapest), December 16, 1953

chance and places them under the guardianship of a Communist and champion bricklayer, Wojciechowski. A good-natured and upright man, Wojciechowski is embarrassed at being appointed "nursemaid" but he tries to find the young boys useful work, and under his influence they abandon their idle ways—their jazz and drinking sessions—and begin to find their place in the new, postwar world. Unfortunately, however, the boys are plagued by their previous ties with a man called Zenon, a saboteur and member of the Fascist underworld, who retains his hold over them and solicits their aid in his scheme to blow up the East-West highway, which is about to be completed. At the last moment, the boys, several of whom have worked on the highway, rebel against Zenon and the movie culminates in a fight in the sewers beneath the city. Kazek, one of the five boys, is seriously injured, but the police arrive and the implication is that both the people's reconstruction efforts and the boys' future will be saved.

Although tension in the film is not always sustained because of too many undeveloped subplots and too frequent shifting from one scene to another, *The Five Boys from Barska Street* has a number of appealing qualities. While the villain, Zenon, is portrayed solely in black colors and remains to the end a caricature rather than a human being, the boys themselves are thoroughly convincing, and the romance between Kazek and Hania, a draftsman whom he meets on the construction site, is natural and refreshing. The movie is most successful when it portrays ordinary workers and intimate scenes between the boys and their living conditions on Barska Street. The workings of

the "fascist" underground, however, are never quite believable, and the scenes dealing directly with Communist life—as, for example, a competition among workers on the construction site of the highway—lack authenticity. In many respects, the camera technique leaves much to be desired, and it is to be regretted that Alexander Ford, who directed the film, did not provide more shots of the destroyed city, or pursue a tighter story line. On the whole, however, the film had many fine touches.

Other films recently produced in Poland are *Cellulose*, the first part of a film adaptation of Igor Newerly's novel, *Souvenir from Cellulose*, *Difficult Love*, the much criticized movie about rural life, and *Incident at Mariensztat*, a musical comedy dealing with the life of construction workers. *Cellulose*, which got the best critical reception of the three, is the story of a young man in prewar Poland of the thirties who, faced with certain experiences and social conditions, becomes an ardent Communist. The hero, Szczesny, describes his metamorphosis to an unknown woman, and the movie depicts his transformation chronologically in distinct, dramatic episodes. According to the reviewers, *Cellulose* was a deeply Party-conscious film, which successfully combined art and ideology. *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), March 6, 1954, commended it for describing the growing "class consciousness in the proletariat confronted with concrete social reality," and for "presenting broad political and artistic generalizations through the life and experiences of one individual in whose fate history is crossed with character and choice, necessity with coincidence. . . . 'Tendency stems from the situation itself.'"

Difficult Love, on the other hand, was called an artistic failure, an incomplete, fragmentary work, which failed to transform the "truth of life into the truth of art." The film suffered chiefly from the fact that too much was crammed into the script and that dramatic unity was lacking. In making these observations, *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), April 16, compared *Difficult Love* with the two earlier postwar attempts to depict life in the countryside. The newspaper said that the first film, *Bright Fields* was totally incorrect ideologically, "despite the authors' pioneering efforts, . . . and presented the picture of village life in a crooked mirror." The second film, *Commune*, represented an advance in that it was based on correct political premises but, on the other hand, "it was crushed against the rocks of schematism and declarativism." *Difficult Love*, attempting to combine "thematic values with an interesting conflict between living people in a specific community and in real conditions," came closer to the ideal, but fell far short of the goal:

"The authors managed to observe and present in the film a young man from the State farm, a Party activist in love with the daughter of a kulak. They managed to observe the kulak's daughter, divided between family ties and love, her genuine interest in the village's new life. There is [also] in the picture a Party man by the name of Michalak, an employee in the PGR who fights for organizing a collective and who is finally killed by the enemy. There is an old Communist, Zimnoch, formerly a source of cheap labor, who through his dreams of a well-deserved old age pension, becomes a hard worker, despite the fact that he is nearing seventy. . . . Every one of them could have been the hero of the film. Every one of their difficult experiences, connected with the experiences of the people, could have been the axis of the film. But all this turned out to be different. Good intentions and, even more, a good approach to the problem were wasted because of serious lack of qualifications on the part of both the scenario writer and the director. Correct observations were presented in an artistically improper setting."

The third contemporary comedy of the postwar era, *Incident at Mariensztat*, also received a mild reception and was generally considered inferior to the first Communist venture into the field, *Treasure*, produced in 1947. The new film concerns a Siakhanovite bricklayer and a young village girl who is learning the trade. The foreman of the project disapproves of women in a "man's profession," and the conflict centers on "a woman's place in the heart of a bricklayer and among men engaged in housing construction." Commenting on the movie's flaws, *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), January 29, 1954, observed: "One of the spectators has aptly remarked that *Incident at Mariensztat* is somehow too 'polite'! For, as he remarked, the comedy often avoids more drastic touches and situations. Its dialogue is sometimes banal and there are empty spots in an otherwise smoothly flowing plot."

While Polish film makers are striving for better quality movies on contemporary themes, it is obvious that their success is often hampered by attempts to crowd too much ideology into the plots. This may be due partly to the fact that not many feature films are produced yearly and that those produced may be considered "too narrow" by regime

spokesmen. The "excessive politeness" of *Incident at Mariensztat* and the failure of films on rural life are probably caused largely by bureaucratic restrictions on what can be said and what is acceptable as "truth."

Czechoslovakia

Although Party-conscious films on contemporary and historical themes remain a basic requirement for the Communist film industry, there has been less rigidity in this respect since the New Course was introduced. Czechoslovakia, which now produces 22 feature films yearly as compared with Poland's eight, has lately issued two films which differ considerably from the usual film fare and from pre-New Course productions. Abandoning both the contemporary and historic stock of Marxist themes, Jan Werich, the noted producer-actor, has lately finished work on a movie entitled *Once Upon A Time There Was A King*, a comedy based on an old Slovak fairy tale, "Salt and Gold." The film is intended primarily as entertainment, and although it deals with good and evil in the manner of fairy tales, it is significant that the moral has not been distorted to serve Communist purposes. Unlike earlier attempts of this sort, the character of the king in the film has not been changed so that he personifies all the sins of imperialism. On the contrary, I, the First, is portrayed as a good-hearted king whose fault is that he is stubborn and misguided by unworthy councillors. At the end of the film, the king is not forced to abdicate but replaces his councillors with advisors from the plain people.

Another departure from the well-worn ideological path of Communist films is *Punta and the Four Kids*, produced by Jiri Weiss who, like Jan Werich, lived in the West in World War II. The movie is about a dog Punta, and four children who become attached to him. Set in the streets of Prague, the film focusses almost exclusively on the psy-



Canal scene from *The Five Boys from Barska Street*. A. Kowalczyk (second from left) plays the role of Zenon, the saboteur, who is forcing the boys to destroy the people's work in rebuilding Warsaw. *Kwartalnik Filmowy* (Warsaw), No. 2, 1954



Scene from *The Five Boys from Barska Street*. Alexandra Slaska won the State Prize for her role as Hania. She is pictured with T. Janeczar, who plays the role of Kazek.

Kwartalnik Filmowy (Warsaw), No. 2, 1954

chological reality of children and their daily adventures. A humorous and alleged interview with Punta, published in *Kino* (Prague), November 18, 1954, provides a fairly good summary of the plot and indicates the largely non-political quality of the film. The interviewer supposedly hears a "bow wow" behind his chair and, turning, sees a small, woolly dog, who begins speaking to him. Trying to remain as calm as possible, the interviewer asks: "What's new?" and the following conversation ensues:

"I am Punta, the famous film star," the dog declared. "You don't say," I said. . . . 'And what are you doing in that film, may I ask?'"

"He looked at me with dismay. . . . 'No harm intended,' I said, 'but just look at yourself. Your father might have been a rough wire haired terrier. . . . If, at least, you had as good a figure as Lassie, I could understand. With her charm you could impress the public . . . but. . . .'"

"Punta was silent. He didn't know what to say. Obviously, he was no outstanding beauty. He was just a fuzzy, rather unshapely little something. Probaby he had never seen a good brush and soap—not to speak of having had a haircut. . . . I asked severely, 'At least you know some tricks? Can you save a person's life? Can you untie knots? Can you extinguish a smoldering fuse of dynamite? Can you change the switch in front of an approaching express train? Can you act like Rin Tin Tin?'"

"With an offended expression, he said: 'I can sit up.'"

After thus emphasizing the naturalistic quality of the film, the interviewer questions Punta about his role in the movie and Punta, replying that he plays the part of a stolen dog, recounts the following:

"I am owned by a girl, Lidka Cermakova. And since it is dull walking around with just one girl all the time, I run away from her and join Tonda Burda. We become great pals and he tells his friends that I am his. But that, too, isn't exciting. Tonda always wants me to run after the ball but he never lets me kick it. Therefore I simply leave and return to Lidka. But Tonda's friends think that Lidka has swiped me and they catch me and bring me back

to Tonda. . . . Tonda pretends that I belong to his teacher, but then the trouble begins since they discover I have no license. The boys have to sell some things and put their pennies together if they want to buy a license and keep me. . . . Lidka tries to find me and all the Pioneers who want to become detectives try to help her by bringing her all the dogs in the district to see if I am among them. . . . [Eventually] the whole thing bursts [but the boys are not punished] and Lidka, Tonda and Pepik and Karel become great friends and we are now a happy group of five."

Another novelty in the field of Czechoslovak cinematography will be the first filmed opera *Dalibor*, based on Smetana's opera. It has been widely publicized and may have been inspired by the large audience appeal recent filmed opera imports have had in the country.

Hungary

In Hungary also, there has been an easing of restrictions on film subjects since the New Course was introduced, and the regime has openly pointed to these, as it has to changes in literature, with the aim of establishing exact limits of the new "freedom." The movie, *Tiny Penny*, mentioned previously, and reported to be the only popular Hungarian film in 1953, received its share of official attention in this respect. *Magyar Nemzet* (Budapest), December 28, 1953, pointed to *Tiny Penny's* departure from earlier productions, although as a whole the film adhered to the standard subject matter, describing life in the new Communist city of Sztalinvaros:

"This is the first picture which presents contemporary Hungarian life through the work of the simple people. At long last we find love, although sketchily as yet. The story has an intriguing plot; it presents a conflict . . . and a large-scale, well-depicted fight between the true builders of Sztalinvaros and city fops who drifted there, giving the struggle a humorous solution. . . . Previous pictures strove to teach the audience, to mobilize them for some purpose, and disregarded the fact that the public sought amusement. . . . The [new] features are inseparable attributes of our People's Democracy's New Course."

Prior to the New Course the two chief types of films produced in Hungary were propaganda films dealing with labor competitions and the struggle between kulaks and kolkhozes, and historical films presenting the Marxist theory of the class struggle. Since the New Course, no direct kolkhoz propaganda has appeared in films, and the subject of labor competition has been pushed into the background. The trend now is to pay more attention to love, to permit slight criticisms of the bureaucracy, and to give more play to personal experience. While the regime has sponsored the public's demands for more amusement, it has not committed any revolutionary about-face, and still insists on fulfillment of ideological requirements. The movie called *Relatives*, which was a film adaptation of a novel about a good-hearted city employee who is driven to suicide by his parasitic relatives, failed to toe the proper line. *Magyar Nemzet* (Budapest), November 7, 1954 indirectly voiced its disapproval of suicide, claiming: "The hero is not a hero in the picture; he is a weakling who deserves his



Caption: "This is the king with the regal name of I, the First. This king is good at the bottom of his heart, but he is too obstinate. He decides to destroy that good-for-nothing mineral, salt, and he does this at once. From old fairy tales, we expect a king to be regal. I, the First, is less regal, but he has a good sense of humor. You are soon convinced of this—mainly because the part of the king is played by Jan Werich."

Kino (Prague), February 10, 1955

fate." Similarly, a film on construction of the never completed Budapest subway was attacked for ignoring the theme of Hungarian-Soviet friendship.

Many New Course films are based on literary works of an earlier period. *The Enchanted Chair*, which is the first postwar satire, was adapted from a novel by the late Frigyes Karinthy, and deals with an inventor who, having been refused an audience with the Undersecretary of State, avenges himself by smuggling into his office an enchanted chair which causes people who sit on it to voice their opinions frankly. Another recent film, *Liliomfi*, is based on a 19th century comedy of the same name, and is about lovers who are separated by their common foster father and who go through various trials before they are reunited.

Love is also the main theme of the regime's latest kolkhoz film, which differs from earlier ones in that it concentrates on the "lighter" aspect of village life and the diversions of the rural population. Entitled *Love in a Horse Carriage*, the movie deals with two lovers who vie for an

old coach, left by the former owner of the farm, during a kolkhoz ball. In his criticism of the film Pal Szabo, writing in *Magyar Nemzet* (Budapest), February 16, 1955, stated that "at times it tends to be corny."

Two other films worth mentioning are *My Grandfather and I* and *Menyhert Simon's Betrayal*. The former deals with the relations between a boy and his grandfather—the two war survivors of their family—showing how the grief-stricken old man takes to drink and beats his grandson. When the old man is finally called to account by the law, the child defends him and makes him into a new person. While the film is based on the popular Communist theme of youth converting the older generation, it is focussed on an intimate human relationship and is less "schematic" than the ordinary film of this type. The other movie, *Menyhert Simon's Betrayal* differs slightly from the usual film fare in that it gives a humorous treatment of the theme of the "people's solidarity," by describing how the people of a remote mountain region all cooperate in helping a forest warden's wife deliver her baby during a winter snowstorm. The motto of the film is "whoever is alive and can move helps."

Documentaries

The majority of films produced behind the Iron Curtain are documentaries covering a wide variety of subjects—industrial, agricultural, historical, social, scientific and cultural—and are designed primarily to "re-educate" the masses and further Party policy. Recent Romanian documentaries have dealt with Romanian-Soviet friendship, the life of railroad workers, the internal reserves of an enterprise and civil aviation. Plans for 1955, announced by *Contemporanul* (Bucharest), January 14, 1955, include documentaries on "activities in the oil and coal industries, kolkhozes, MTS, the life of an RPR scientist, a teacher's portrait, cultural clubs, raising the living standard and agro-zootechnical problems." Aside from movies on the above subjects, Hungary has recently produced films on Hungarian folk dances and wild life, which are reported to be quite successful; Poland has produced a documentary on Copernicus; and the other Satellites have also produced a number of more "purely" cultural and educational films.

The use of documentaries for direct propaganda purposes is perhaps best illustrated by recent information on the Romanian film festival in rural areas. The purpose of the festival, held between December and March, was to increase farm production. Soviet and Satellite films were shown on new agricultural techniques and on the advantages of kolkhoz farming, etc. It was announced that by March 10 more than one million peasants had been shown these films by 120 caravans in 1,000 permanent theater units and 3,000 villages. The festival, however, was not entirely successful and numerous complaints referred to the poor propaganda work of activists and local officials, who regarded the campaign with considerable indifference. Thus, *Contemporanul*, December 17, 1954, wrote:

"[There are] frequent cases of negligence and even violation of existing regulations, such as the time when the president of a people's council arbitrarily suspended per-

performances for two days, and instead turned over facilities for a public dance. . . . In another place, the movie hall was used for a kulak wedding. Because of this and other reasons, attendance in one village was only 521 persons for 12 shows, thus coming to an average of 45 persons per performance. . . . It is desirable that the local press pay more attention to the activists' role in [disseminating films] which is modest but altogether important; for he is also the bringer of the light of the film, this great blessing of our culture, to the place where it is needed most—among our working peasants."

Similar complaints were issued by *Contemporanul*, March 10, which noted the lack of enthusiasm of local officials by stating that most of the people responsible for the festival did not "fully realize that cinematography means to mobilize the working peasantry for implementation of Party and government policies, that cinematography urges peasants to eke out of the earth ever greater amounts of produce which, in turn, ought to contribute to the improvement of food supplies of our population."

Film Imports

While the largest proportion of films shown behind the Iron Curtain are of Soviet and Satellite production, the



Caption: "There is another person to be included in the close family circle. It is the king's right hand, his personal physician and advisor, in other words, Atakdale, his accomplice in all incidents and unpleasant business. His name is proof of his many functions. In this tale his role is not small: he is also a real partner to his sovereign in dispensing humor. The actor's name isn't even necessary to mention—everybody knows Vlasta Burian." Atakdale means "etc." Film is "Once Upon a Time There Was a King."

Kino (Prague), February 10, 1955

number of movies imported from the free world has increased significantly in the past two years and these have been sufficiently popular to cause consternation in official circles. The people's preference for non-Communist films, noted continually in refugee reports, was admitted by the Hungarian Party newspaper *Szabad Nep* (Budapest), February 7, 1955 in an article deploring the fact that "light and fantastic Western movies" attract larger audiences than those produced in the Soviet orbit. *Szabad Nep* remarked that such an attitude was understandable at the beginning of the New Course when the showing of Western films was resumed because the people were starved for them. But even now, the newspaper complained, young people brought up under Communism flock to see "trashy Western shows." As an antidote to this, *Szabad Nep* recommended that Hungary produce more comedies, although it cautioned that such films should not be allowed to take the place of films dealing with the "problems of Socialism."

In Czechoslovakia, the youth paper *Mlada Fronta* made a similar revelation on February 4, 1955, when it complained about the lack of enthusiasm manifested for Soviet films. "The cinemas of Prague are all too often supplied with films which hamper our struggle and are harmful to the education of youth. . . . On the other hand, some Soviet films which have become classics are never screened."

As mentioned previously, the rise in Western imports has created competition on the East European film market, and the popularity of these imports has forced the Communists to recognize that the "battle for men's minds" cannot be won by didacticism alone, that they must provide art and amusement for the masses and broaden the base of their own film ventures.

Because of their social content, the Communists have always favored imports of "progressive" Italian films as suitable models for artistic and "ideological" emulation. French films also have been imported for some years past. With the New Course, the Communists evinced a willingness to permit a wider variety of imports, and the latest trend is to show a substantial selection of English films, as well as films from Japan, India and other non-Communist countries. In 1955, Poland expects to double the number of premieres—that is, to increase the number from 60 to 120—and the films scheduled to be shown include ten Italian imports, nine French, eleven English, and imports from India, Mexico, Sweden, Australia, Argentina, Japan and Spain.* Some of the titles listed are: *A Tale of Poor Lovers*, *Bread, Love and Dreams*, *The Golden Coach*, *Beauties of the Night*, *Oliver Twist*, *Pickwick's Papers*, *The Cruel Sea*, *Henry V*, *The Lavender Hill Mob*, *The Crab Fishers*, *But Still We Live*, *Woman's Fate*, and *Gate of Hell*. Although Hollywood films are still greeted with intense disapproval, two independently produced American films, *The Little Fugitive* and *Salt of the Earth*, are scheduled to be shown. In Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the trend is similar, and according to *Magyar Nemzet* (Budapest), January 6, 1955, it appears that Communist film imports no longer have priority in Hungary. In 1955, Hungary will show 28 films made in the free world, as com-

* *Przegląd Kulturalny* (Warsaw), February 3-9, 1955.



Scene from *My Grandfather and I*

Photograph from cover of *Színház és Filmművészet* (Budapest), November 1954

pared with 34 made in the Soviet bloc—and nine of the 34 are to be of Hungarian production. Of all the captive countries, Bulgaria seems to have the least variety of imports, and comparatively old Western films are often shown in that country. The list of 1955 imports broadcast by Radio Sofia, January 3, 1955, contained many little-known titles. Musicals seemed to be featured, and such movies as *Spring on the Ice* (Austrian), *Franz Schubert* (Austrian) and *The King Entertains Himself*, an Italian film on Verdi, are scheduled. These were very successful in Hungary last year.

Criticism

Criticism of Western films in the Communist press usually has a political focus, although the people themselves show complete disregard for the ideological correctness of imports. In Hungary, where Austrian and musical films played to standing room audiences, the critics felt it necessary to voice their disapproval. *Magyar Nemzet* (Budapest), August 8, 1954, deploring the popularity of a film on Puccini, commented: "Everybody says it is 'wonderful'. . . . What is the reason for such fabulous success? The public is cheated. It does not know the life of Puccini and what it gets is sham passion and sham sentiment."

Italian realistic films, as mentioned above, are accorded more critical respect, largely because their serious artistry is used on subject matter which is considered to be "Socialist" in content. In discussing *Rome 11 O'Clock*, *Magyar Nemzet*, August 20, 1954, claimed that the "richness and power of life, life of the poor, penetrates the atmosphere

of the whole movie and fills it with optimism, giving the audience the wonderful feeling that it has learned and come to love the Italian people, who continually fight relentlessly for freedom." In Poland, Adam Pawlikowski, writing in *Przegląd Kulturalny* (Warsaw), March 4-10, discussed *Rome 11 O'Clock* in relation to other Italian films investigating the "anti-humanitarianism of the capitalist system":

"It is difficult to establish whether *Rome 11 O'Clock* is indeed—as most critics maintain—the best of all Italian movies. Its strength lies, first of all, in that it has somehow comprised experiences and materials collected in the past. It could not have been made without *The Bicycle Thief* . . . *The Miracle in Milan* and other masterpieces. The truth discovered in these pictures has been presented in *Rome 11 O'Clock* in the final form so that the picture has become a final summary of incriminating evidence in the investigation of social crime. . . . Among the best progressive Italian pictures, it has occupied a place prepared for it by the past. In the trial brought about by Italian art against the country's social system, the picture occupies among other Italian films an exceptional and unusual place, for it expresses best the formula of final accusation."

The official attitude towards other imports has not been as favorable. Reporting on *Oliver Twist*, *Magyar Nemzet* (Budapest), August 2, 1953, stated: "The great art of Dickens lies in the fact that he can demonstrate how much Fagin and his gang are organic parts of capitalist society. This is not expressed in the movie at all. On the contrary, it tries to convey the opposite." As for the Swedish movie, *One Summer of Happiness*, *Magyar Nemzet*, January 5, 1955, described it as a profound human tragedy of capitalist society, but objected: "For the Hungarian people it is rather exotic. It is very hard for young people to believe that the stubbornness of a single person [a clergyman] could hold back so fatefully the social development of a whole community."

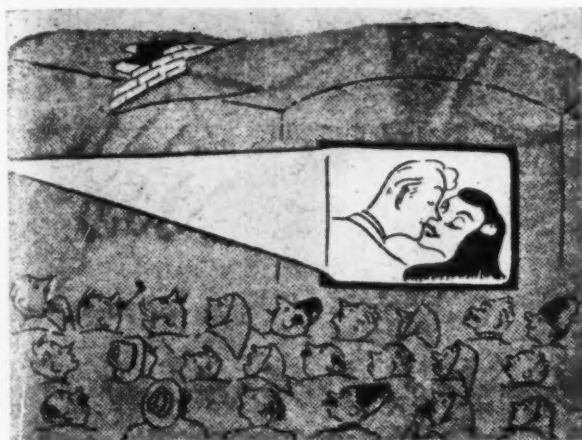
The film, *Moulin Rouge*, which significantly, was considered to be a British production by most Satellite reviewers, got a fairly favorable reception in *Svobodno Slovo* (Prague), July 3, 1954, although it was judged to be imperfect from the ideological point of view:

"*Moulin Rouge* . . . attempts to emulate the colors of the painter's palette. In the conception of the director, plastic hues prevail over psychological hues—which guarantees its success with the audience. Jose Ferrar and Colette Marchand are actors of great capacity. . . . Houston's film is not free of Hollywood influence . . . and, scrutinized ideologically, will give rise to lively discussion. However, it has a high artistic level and in many respects has values bordering on revelation."

On occasion, the man in the street is asked to give his opinions on the film fare offered and this amateur criticism is often far more trenchant than that of professional reviewers. The Polish weekly *Przegląd Kulturalny* (Warsaw), March 25-31, 1954, published the following letter with respect to the film repertoire in 1953:

"Polish cinematography—what can one say about it? *Three Stories* is a product of graduates of the film school.

In the Movies



Caption: "It's so exciting!"

"Well, love is a beautiful thing!"

"Who's talking about love? The whole audience is watching to see when the ceiling's going to fall down."

Ludas Matyi (Budapest), February 3, 1955

So it should be considered a students' effort . . . and shown to a limited circle of fellow amateurs. One could write a great deal about the *Soldier of Victory* [a regular feature film] but none of this would be complimentary. . . . One

can only express one's regret about the existing opportunism of our film critics. . . . Soviet cinematography has not made any visible progress in the past three years. Its films, shown in our cinemas in 1953, have never been above average. We have not seen any valuable works. . . . The Italians, though we have seen only a few of their pictures, have gained recognition as makers of works of high artistic value. . . . French films have been considered very good for years."

Another Polish citizen, expressing his views with unusual frankness, commented on the quality of imports as follows: "Films produced by Austrians, Chinese, Indians or Romanians definitely cannot be listed among those which must be shown . . . on our screen. They merely served as a reminder that we were in contact with the cinematography of those countries. We have seen nothing of films produced in England, the US, Japan, Holland, Mexico, Sweden and other countries." The plans for increased imports in 1955 will undoubtedly satisfy the curiosity of Polish citizens and have a great impact on domestic film production.

It should be mentioned in passing that criticism of domestic film production is as yet a relatively undeveloped field in most of the Satellite countries. While movies are assessed at film and cultural sessions and in cultural magazines, the ordinary movie review is generally an advertisement. This is probably due to the fact that to pan a domestic movie is a very serious affair, since the choice of domestic films is limited, and the various regimes sponsor movie production and expect films to fulfill certain educational functions.

Private Enterprise

Beautiful Lucyna Hartman, whose only credentials were her shapely figure, good clothes, and enough poise to convince one smitten Polish factory manager after another that she was a "senior inspector of the ministry of control," managed to "virtually control a number of buildings and machinery enterprises," according to *Zycie Warszawy* (Warsaw), December 23, 1954.

The paper relates how the glamorous "Mrs. Inspector" went from factory to factory in official state cars furnished by the managers, who also made hefty loans to Lucyna after she had finished discussing drawbacks in their production set-ups or offered to intervene personally for them with the Polish control ministry. In this way she "virtually controlled a building enterprise in Nowa Huta, a silk mill, a velvet factory, a communications equipment plant, two foundries, the central management of decorative fabrics, and the Wroclaw building union." Other factories located in Kalisz, Lodz, Cracow, Stalingrad and Silesia also succumbed to Lucyna's treatment.

Her career lasted two months. When security police finally caught up with her she was on vacation in Zakopane, accompanied by two factory managers.

The House of Culture

IN THE Soviet bloc, cultural and recreational life, like virtually all aspects of life, has been collectivized in the name of "Socialist" efficiency and control. In each captive country the regime has laid out a network of community centers called, according to their size and scope, houses of culture, cultural clubs, and reading rooms. The clubs and reading rooms function in villages, factories and State and collective farms. Houses of culture cover a wider administrative area, usually a district. The system, which is copied from the Soviet Union, is overlaid on the old pattern of community organizations such as trade union recreation centers in the cities, farmers' groups, reading circles and church clubs in the countryside. After the Communist coups, the Party undertook to supplant these independent nuclei with organizations centrally-controlled and serving as outlets for an official cultural program. The house of culture, and its lesser units, is the social collective for off-the-job activity, and it is a major center of regime influence in the community.

Houses of culture have been rapidly expanded. In 1947, there were 256 houses of culture in Romania; by the end of 1955 there will be 13,500, if the plan is met. As of 1954, there were also 10,400 cultural clubs, 12,000 libraries (200 in 1947), 1700 reading rooms, and 1720 so-called cultural "corners" (*Scinteia* [Bucharest], June 24, 1954).

Hungary reported 1900 district houses of culture at the end of 1954. In addition, there are approximately 400 special factory houses of culture and 250 other cultural clubs attached to work sites, according to *Statistikai Szemle* (Budapest), February 1955. In Bulgaria, there are 4417 houses of culture, increasing at the rate of about 60 a year, and 10,000 libraries. (*Zemedelsko Zname* [Sofia], February 9, 1955). Czechoslovakia, where the program is least intensive, probably because existing institutions are being utilized, has not published relevant figures. However, a September 1952 resolution of the Board of Commissioners for Slovakia stipulated that National Committees were to establish in every district center a house of culture and in every village a cultural club "which is to become the unified social-cultural center of the community." (*Pravda* [Bratislava], March 2, 1954).



Book distribution in a Romanian farming village.

Romanian News, July 1950

Statistics compiled from the Polish press show that there are 89 district, 72 factory, and 14 youth houses of culture; 10,720 factory and 17,000 village cultural clubs; and about 10,000 libraries. It thus appears that every third district has a house of culture, every fourth village a club, and every third new rural commune a library. One of the major Communist showplaces in the Soviet bloc, the Stalin Palace of Science and Culture, will be opened to the public by a special Soviet delegation on July 22, as a "gift" of the Soviet people to the city of Warsaw. The Palace is the architectural focal point of Warsaw's new city center. It contains a large congress hall, a theater with a capacity of 800, two movie theaters, lecture and concert halls, gymnasiums, and a swimming pool. The Polish Academy of Science, the Society of Popular Knowledge, and a museum of industry and technology will also be quartered in the Palace. Its two wings will be a youth house of culture. In front is a huge square for parades and "mass demonstrations."

Administration and Direction

At the community level, houses of culture and cultural clubs are run by the district or local councils, usually represented by a "cultural activist." Party members are encouraged and expected to "guide closely" the activities of the houses of culture, as are the members of the Youth Leagues, the Trade Unions, and the National Front organizations. *Narodna Mladej* (Sofia), January 29, 1955, declared that "the Dimitrov Union of Youth [DUPY] has an important part in the successes of the houses of culture. . . . In many [of these houses] the DUPY organizations have become the soul, the initiator of all activities."

A report by the Bulgarian Union of Houses of Culture

in *Zemedelsko Zname*, December 28, 1954, stated that "for fulfillment of the goals of the houses of culture, the full and continuous cooperation of the mass organizations is essential. All decisions on the cultural-educational program have been undertaken in collaboration with DUPY, with the Fatherland Front, the Central Council of Trade Unions, the Voluntary Organization for Defense and the Committee for Physical Culture and Sport." In line with this policy, the Reading Room Union, an association of reading rooms in villages, has lately been merged with and will subsequently be run by the Fatherland Front. (*Rabotnichesko Delo*, [Sofia], April 29).

The role of "cultural activist" was discussed in a December 1951 directive of the Romanian Council of Ministers. This directive stipulates that cultural activists "are not to be employed in any other kind of work" and that all State Ministries must participate in the development of cultural clubs. *Contemporanul* (Bucharest), September 9, 1953, wrote that the cultural activist's "first qualification" is "a correct political orientation." The importance of his work was stressed by the same paper on July 16, 1954: "No effort is too great, no moment 'inconvenient,' no phase of activity can be too 'crowded' with other tasks, when the noble duty entrusted to [the cultural activist] by the Party . . . must be carried out."

Rural Drive

From the beginning, the chief emphasis has been on establishing houses of culture in the rural districts. Peasants are generally more isolated from each other and do not have the diversified resources of the urban population—nor are they as accessible to regime propaganda. This means that the house of culture, often their only gathering place, has a greater variety of functions and more influence than in cities. Jozsef Revai, at that time Minister of Culture in Hungary, declared in the August 19, 1952 issue of *Szabad Nep* (Budapest): "The village house of culture must become the center of rural community life, replacing the tavern and the church. . . ." *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw) wrote on December 19, 1953, that "village community centers, houses of culture, libraries, are all instruments for raising the political and cultural level of the masses. . . . They could and should become a center for propagating agricultural and modern technical knowledge, for strengthening the worker-peasant alliance, for the Socialist transformation of the village. . . . The community centers help peasants in combating kulaks' gossip and obscurantism. . . ." *Scinteia*, February 3, 1951, wrote that the rural houses of culture are "centers for the fight against the kulak class" and that "cultural activities constitute an effective way to popularize the Five Year Plan, the Plan for the electrification of the rural area, and the consolidation of kolkhozes."

Houses of culture and clubs range from sparsely equipped centers having only a library and a game room to lavishly-equipped palaces with laboratories, gymnasiums, auditoriums and even sports stadiums. The number and diversity of activities also varies; in general, houses of culture have movies, sports, amateur acting, dancing, singing groups,

reading groups, courses in agricultural and industrial production techniques, political lectures, and adult education courses to eradicate illiteracy.

Szabad Nep, December 24, 1954, wrote of the Hungarian town of Szatymaz: "At the house of culture there is plenty of entertainment and opportunity for studies. There is something scheduled for each night of the week: performances of plays, dancing, music rehearsals, agricultural circles, political circles, lectures. . . . Members of the theatrical group are enthusiastic actors. Istvan Sanata walks many miles a day to be able to attend rehearsals and discussions. . . . Their especially funny acts are cheered by the farm people. Spirits soar when the orchestra starts to play. . . . But we could go on indefinitely telling about the lively sports activities, the achievements of the table tennis group or the dance group. . . ."

The March 11, 1954 issue of *Nok Lapja* (Budapest) carried a description of the daily round at the house of culture in Polgardi, a small town with a population of about 4000:

"It is midday, the streets are empty, when suddenly we hear the strains of music coming from somewhere. The Blue Danube waltz, and not from the radio. . . . It comes from the house of culture, and we go in to see. There we find 52 children playing musical instruments, in a large circle conducted by a teacher. . . . It is the Pioneer orchestra, with the Red Banner above them, indicating that the group was the winner of the county contest. . . ."

"The afternoon finds us in the house of culture again, this time in the library. 800 books are not many—but still. . . . An 80 year-old grandmother holds a volume with the same tenderness she would hold a day-old chick. . . ."

"Then evening comes, and again to the house of culture. Tonight there is no movie, so the stage is free for the actors to rehearse. They are doing a production of a classical play by Kisfaludy. Mokany, one of the actors, says his lines dressed in overalls because during the day he works at the Machine Tractor Station. He is very good as he speaks the lines of the landowner in the play: 'The eternal carousing is bound to end in sorrow'—and as he speaks he looks in the direction where the landowner's castle formerly stood and where the Machine Tractor Station is now located. . . ."

Women and Children First

According to the Communists, houses of culture are the visible, material symbols of the regime's care for the masses, and represent the democratization of culture; they stand in contrast to the exclusiveness of the old "bourgeois" circles which they are meant to replace. *Magyar Nemzet*, November 27, 1954, wrote of the mountain village of Meotarkany: "An urgent problem . . . is the expansion of the house of culture. The 'people's circle' of before the liberation was founded exclusively by the well-to-do farmers; the sharecroppers, the poor, never crossed its threshold. In contrast, the house of culture belongs to everybody and the building can hardly hold half of all the people interested in the programs. . . ."

The regime is particularly anxious to attract to the houses of culture women and young people, the group formerly most active in church organizations. The follow-

ing extract from *Nok Lapja* (Budapest), January 13, 1955, is a sample of this type of propaganda:

"In the house of culture at Domony we meet the youth—singing, they wave their little colored kerchiefs, expressing their buoyant spirits. As we arrive [at the house of culture] in Galgagyork, fire is humming in the stoves and we can look forward to an evening of cooking by the women. . . . After six, the room fills fast with people; breaded veal is being prepared on the stove, and delicious squash. The table is covered with beautiful handmade linen. . . . Then the married women arrive. Before, it was mostly young girls. Obviously girls have more time, and also, they are more susceptible to the new. And the house of culture is something new. Of course the married women would learn only good things here and yet there are husbands or grandmothers who look upon the house of culture with suspicion. So it is really encouraging that the young matrons are coming. In Guzai and Rokka they recreate the warm atmosphere of the old village spinneries in the house of culture which is established in the former local landowner's castle. . . . We hurry to Bag to see the dancing class for junior high school girls and high school boys. The mothers are sitting all along the walls, as is fitting. They have come to watch their daughters. . . ."

Poland has twelve special houses of culture for youth and two "Youth Palaces" modelled on the Soviet Komsomol Houses. Most of these were set up in 1949-50, in the buildings of the then-liquidated YMCA ("a capitalistic institution connected with American imperialist organizations"), and are under the jurisdiction of the Polish Ministry of Education. The Warsaw Youth Palace has four departments: the artistic department, with a puppet theater, orchestra, acting, singing and dance groups; the technical department with facilities for electrotechnics, radio, mechanics, airplane and ship modelling and photography; the physical culture department, with competitive sports, gymnastics, a cycling club, and the largest swimming pool in Warsaw; and a science department, not yet completed. There is also a large library and reading room. The Palace has a capacity of about 2000 people a day, although actual average attendance is 300-400. It is claimed that the Palace will accommodate about 5000 youths daily once the Plan is fulfilled, all space utilized and the staff increased.

Szabad Nep, November 4, 1954, wrote of youth activities at the house of culture in Tata, a Hungarian mining town and agricultural center:

" . . . The young people have gotten accustomed to going to the house of culture and the place becomes ever livelier. The dances in the evening are very successful. The town committee organized a ball for the outstanding miners, to which 600 people came. To the 'Polka-Dot Ball' the girls wore polka-dot gowns and the boys polka-dot ties. 2000 forints in prizes were distributed to the winners of the dance contest. There was also a beauty contest and a prize for the prettiest dress. . . . The house of culture has also organized regular Sunday excursions to Budapest. Each time 60 to 70 young people enjoy a full day in Budapest. The program includes sight-seeing, a sports event, a play or a movie. . . . In the meantime, [the young people] are constantly thinking up new projects. For instance, they

were preparing in greatest secrecy a gala wedding for two members of their group. The young people will walk up to the registrar between banners and . . . several hundred young people will enjoy the party. . . ."

However cheerful this picture, the houses of culture must not be permitted to degenerate into centers of frivolity. Young people in Hungary are sometimes accused of turning the houses into dance halls for jitterbugging. *Beke es Szabadsag*, (Budapest), April 12, 1954 criticized "members of the people's folk dance ensemble in full costume [who were] making the convulsive movements and distorted faces of jitterbugging. . . ." *Contemporarul*, (Bucharest), September 9, 1953 complained that "the activity of certain cultural clubs and houses of culture is too much limited to sports events and social evenings"; and *Scinteia*, May 13, 1954, criticized the "lack of political content" and "disorganized programs which fail to promote the new technical methods."

Utility is the major criterion for the houses of culture. Their prime task—"to raise the cultural-educational level"—means spreading and standardizing economic and political "enlightenment." The libraries and reading rooms, the agricultural and political circles all serve this end. In its article on the Szatymas house of culture, *Szabad Nep* claimed that "the youths of Szatymas are not only enthusiastic about entertainment; the agricultural circle has more than a hundred members. During the winter they study the methods of fruit growing. At the recent session of the political circle 24 were present. The subject was: 'Let's Get Acquainted With Our People's Republic!' In the library, 1000 volumes wait to be read. . . ."

The libraries are given prominence in cultural publicity. *Zemedeislsko Zname*, (Sofia), December 28, 1954, reported that the number of books in Bulgarian libraries has almost doubled (from approximately two to four million) and that the opening of summer reading rooms by some houses of culture is proving very successful. New activities, such as public book discussions, writers' meetings, readers'

Legend: The Lepseny library was given enough chairs but no tables.



Librarian: "The 30 minutes are over. Readers will now be tables and the tables will now read."

Ludas Matyi (Budapest), November 30, 1954

conferences, are "constantly being introduced." Warsaw's Workers' Calendar for 1952 states that "the community centers and cultural-educational committees carry out intensified popularization of reading and cultivate workers' interest in production and technical literature."

Houses of culture are also responsible for promoting the current Party and government programs on the local level. *Trybuna Ludu*, December 19, 1953, wrote: "The life of the community centers cannot be separated from the major political and economic campaigns [of the regime]!" *Scintila*, June 24, 1954, called for "a steady improvement of the cultural-educational drive among the peasants" and directed all concerned to "do everything possible to contribute to the penetration of the masses by Party policies, to the mobilization of workers in the struggle to obtain a rich harvest!" Since last summer, the emphasis on agriculture in the Soviet bloc has been reflected in the activities of the houses of culture; in Romania, for example, a national conference of directors of houses of culture was held in July 1954 to determine the way in which the houses are to "push" the agricultural campaign.

Local issues—often conflicts between independent peasants and the regime projects—are taken up. *Beke es Szabad-sag* (Budapest), March 1, 1954, described such an occasion: "Around the table in the central hall of the Tata house of culture sit the chairman of the people's council, the director of the house of culture, and representatives of the Livestock Exchange and the Road Maintenance Bureau. The room is crowded with some 400 men, mostly independent farmers, who hope to get the answer and solution to some pressing problems. This evening the relations between the working peasantry and the Livestock Exchange, failures to pay the fee for clearing the roads of snow, and the credit project for small apartment construction will be discussed. . . ."

Another duty of the houses of culture is to disseminate Soviet "culture." How this program is carried out in the Polish youth houses was explained by a refugee. Choruses learn Soviet mass songs, sung later at meetings and demonstrations, countryside excursions, and over the radio. The dance group prepares both Polish and Russian folk dances, performed on such occasions as the Polish-Soviet Friendship Month. The modelling groups build models of Soviet planes and ships, at the same time studying the history of the Soviet Navy and "learning" that the first plane was invented by the Russians. Boys interested in cars study the Soviet ZIS; the dramatic group gives Soviet plays. Radio mechanics and operators "know" that the radio was invented by Popoff and maintain a "brotherly" contact with Russian short-wave amateurs. (Only highly reliable members of the Youth League are allowed to pursue this hobby.) In all houses of culture the reading rooms are well supplied with Soviet periodicals, and almost all give Russian language courses.

In the August 19, 1952 issue of *Szabad Nep*, Hungarian Party theoretician Jozsef Revai directed that "the houses of culture utilize every possibility for fostering the ardent love felt by the Hungarian people toward our liberator, the mighty Soviet Union." That this program is not pro-

ceeding smoothly may be deduced from the reprimand to the houses of culture published in *Dunantuli Naplo* (Pecs), April 24, 1955. The paper complained that Hungarian houses of culture "failed to celebrate the 10th anniversary of our liberation adequately; furthermore, during these ten years they have failed to make the people sufficiently conscious of . . . the life and culture of the Soviet Union."

Culture on the Move

One of the most important tasks of the houses of culture is to sponsor and direct the so-called cultural brigades. These are amateur acting, dancing and singing groups composed of local residents of the community. The groups tour the country and engage in national competitions. In Hungary, the winners compete in a National Culture contest held every second year in Budapest, and the winners perform not only inside the country but also abroad (formerly only in the Soviet bloc, China and Korea; lately also in Western Europe).

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of "liberation" by the Soviet Union, 4,040 such groups with over 42,000 members were organized in Albania. (However, these groups were formed for the occasion and were afterwards allowed to disperse). In Bulgaria, there were as of September 1953, 6,403 permanent brigades at the houses of culture. In Romania, the third annual competition was held in 1954 and linked with the "liberation" celebrations. On August 22, 1954, *Rominia Libera* (Bucharest) announced that a gala performance by the leading groups in the contest would be given for top Party and government officials; 11,000 brigades competed.

These groups perform folk songs and dances, with the participants dressed in traditional costume. On November 27, 1954, *Magyar Nemzet* carried a note about the mountain village of Meotarkany:

"The village has been made famous by the 'wedding dance of Tarkany.' The 60-member folk ensemble made it famous all over the country. Even at the Budapest festival it was a great success. The revival of folk traditions brought new incentive to the daily life of the village. Sandor Bartok, the teacher, founded the dance ensemble about two years ago. Gradually, the whole village joined the worthy educational activity, as a result of which the young people are returning to the traditional folk costumes. And also instead of going to the tavern on Sundays they go to the house of culture. . . . They are now practicing a new dance. They are trying to revive the carnival, which in the old times lasted sometimes for three days."

Szabad Nep, October 6, 1954, wrote of the town of Bekescsaba:

"Through the upper windows of the house of culture in Luther Street comes the sound of shuffling feet and the strains of music. Young boys and girls dressed in shorts and shirts dance the ribbon dance. The Balassi dance and music ensemble, pride of the town, is rehearsing here. There is Sandor Fori, locomotive operator, turning with his partner. Next to them, Zsofi Geczei, Stakhanovite of a garment factory, dances with a high-school boy. In the middle of the room a man with a mustache watches the dancers. He is Miklos Bor, a former assistant tailor turned

choreographer. They are rehearsing for their 1068th performance. In a window, little flags pinned to a map indicate that the group has already been in Vienna, Albania, several places in the country and at the World Youth Meeting in Budapest. In addition to the Hungarian dances they perform the national dances of four countries . . . no words could express more eloquently the brotherly feeling between nations of different tongues."

The cultural brigades, operating arms of the houses of culture, are used extensively for production agitation. They must point up and dramatize the current slogans in play, song and dance. In rural districts, according to *Scinteia*, June 24, 1954, "cultural brigades must display, in addition to regular activities at the cultural clubs, an intensive drive in the fields, at the reception centers for produce deliveries, and everywhere else where peasants gather in large numbers. . . . Programs must be composed of songs, dialogues, sketches, with subjects related to the summer agricultural campaign and as much as possible to what is specific in the particular district. . . . Programs may not be 'universal.'" The paper stressed that the object of the cultural agitation then under way was "to increase the per hectare production rate."

Some of the performances are given specifically to "celebrate" the day of delivery deadlines. *Magyar Nemzet* wrote on August 24, 1954, about Jaszkeser, a farming center on the Hungarian Great Plains: "For four weeks an indefatigable, enthusiastic acting troupe tours the Bekes, Hajdu and Szolnok counties under the auspices of the Ministry of Crop Collection, to reward the peasants for their completed deliveries. . . . In towns favored with a show, and even in the neighboring villages which have only heard about the show, deliveries show a sharp increase, right after the day of performance. . . ." (Italics added)

The house of culture itself is represented as a reward for completed delivery obligations: "Egyhazasdaroc continues to meet delivery obligations unflinching. The people already are enjoying the fruit of their love of duty. On October 10, the house of culture was opened in the village, a beautiful building erected at the cost of half a million forints." (*Szabad Nep*, October 13, 1954.) In Romania, *Scinteia*, July 29, 1954, reported that cultural brigades were being introduced at all work sites: "groups of eight to twelve artists perform during mealtimes and after work in factories, on construction sites, and in the fields." The Warsaw Workers' Calendar for 1952 mentioned that "agitation and propaganda carried out at factories occupies an important part of cultural work. . . . Cultural brigades have related their programs and the content of their work to the creative struggle for the fulfillment of the Plan. Teams of plastic artists have become interested in production themes, and the work of scientists has been linked with that of rationalizers and inventors. Thus the tendency to limit cultural and educational work to a community center is being overcome. . . . Linking the work of community centers with that of agitators in factories outside of community centers produces far better results. . . ."

In factories, songs and dialogues are used to criticize late-comers, deficiencies in work processes, waste and idle-



"The group of the general school of Kecel prepares for the finals of the county cultural contest with an old shepherds' dance."

Beke es Szabadsag (Budapest), February 8, 1953

ness. Also, duplicating the practice of "Socialist" competitions in other sectors, local competitions between cultural brigades of various enterprises have been organized. *Munca* (Bucharest), July 16, 1954, listed the programs of several such events: A series of lectures on the tenth anniversary of the "liberation by the glorious Soviet Army"; three discussions on a literary work and several technical books; three lectures on the quality of products and the necessity for decreasing industrial waste; lectures by shockworkers on their experience; a conversation between a Communist fighter in the former underground and a youth.

Old Ways "Best"?

The crude attempt to link up leisure activity with work has made many of the captive people shy away from the houses of culture. Thus, in *Szabad Nep* of October 19, 1954, Hungary's Deputy Minister of Culture Ferenc Janosi had to acknowledge that "existing cultural institutions have failed to grow into institutions embracing the broad masses, [they have failed to become] people's institutions in the true sense of the word. *Our people do not feel that these institutions belong to them, and do not use or support them as if they owned them.*" (Italics added)

This was a frank admission of failure and it spurred a regime drive in Hungary, to reactivate some of the old, pre-Communist community organizations. Village life before the war had centered in clubs called reading and farmers' circles. After 1945, the non-Communist political parties, particularly the Smallholders and Peasant Parties, had tried to keep alive and develop these organizations, but in 1947-48 the Communists dissolved them as "breeding places of reaction." The State-controlled houses of culture were designed to take their place.

Under the New Course, the regime had to recognize

that the houses of culture had not filled the gap and that the masses—particularly the peasants—had remained aloof from them. As Minister Janosi saw it, “in developing the life of our houses of culture, we ignored all the healthy traditions; [and] this was the [main] reason why our people ceased to take an interest in their activities and sought to satisfy cultural needs elsewhere.” *Magyar Nemzet* wrote on November 14: “From the point of view of our people’s education and entertainment, farmers’ and reading circles would be of importance even if our houses of culture were operating satisfactorily, which is by no means the case. In many instances, the house of culture is regarded as a kind of State office. . . .”

In his *Szabad Nep* article, Minister Janosi pointed out that the ineffectiveness of the houses of culture “is particularly striking when we compare them to the reading circles. These are established and maintained by the people themselves, and the people feel they belong to them. It is evident that we must wholeheartedly support the revival of these circles. The people have made it plain that they expect something different of our houses of culture. They expect these to implement on a larger scale what the reading circles realized on a smaller scale: independent activity, democratic leadership, satisfaction of the adult population’s political, cultural and recreational needs.”

Under the New Course the revival of farmers’ and reading circles was part of a regime bid for the support and cooperation of the peasants. Minister of Culture Jozsef Darvas declared in *Magyar Nemzet*, October 24, 1954: “It is mainly one section of our peasantry who feel aversion for the houses of culture, do not feel at home in them, and refrain from going to them. [The Patriotic People’s Front] should establish reading circles and arouse the peasants’

desire to learn.” A writer in *Magyar Nemzet*, October 31, wrote on behalf of the old circles:

“In Devavanya, the people’s circle had a strong tradition. It was a mistake to let it decline. I remember the lively social life at the semi-proletarian small-peasant *Chutka*-circle, whose members were solely farmhands and day laborers, and at the middle-peasant circle. All were called clubs, the small peasants’ as well as the gentlemen’s, and each club had an amateur acting group and some of them even had an orchestra. Today all this is gone. One of [the clubs] became a gymnasium, the other was allowed to fall into ruins, and the clubhouse of the *Chutka* group was taken over by a private individual. In the building of the former craftsmen’s association there is . . . a house of culture—but only in theory, since nobody goes to it. The craftsmen were given a tiny room which they consider unworthy of them and their former home.”

Another group charged with boycotting the houses of culture is the intelligentsia. Deputy Minister of Culture Erno Mihalyfi wrote in *Magyar Nemzet*, October 10, 1954, that the artists of Sarospatak “live in seclusion, in an almost aristocratic exclusiveness, and the workers rightly feel that this seclusion is offensive. A large house of culture has been opened in Sarospatak, and not once have the musicians given a concert there, or the artists exhibited their pictures; no attempt has ever been made by them to join in the life of the houses of culture.”

A spokesman in *Magyar Nemzet*, December 29, charged that young people, and girls in particular, did not want to go to the houses of culture. In his youth, wrote the author, the young people gathered eagerly in the farmers’ circles to give plays and dances.

The December 18 issue of the same paper described the revival of one circle: “The people of Szentbenedekpuszta received 6000 forints from the Ministry of Public Education to furnish their old reading circle, which they have reconstructed themselves. For two days they went from store to store buying a victrola, radio, table tennis set, a chess set, and even two packs of cards for those who like a game of cards in the evening, by the stove. . . . The spacious room is clean and orderly, the reading circle has many members again.”

Magyar Nemzet on October 31, 1954, warned that “of course, no one suggests that [the circles] should be returned to the former condition—exclusive, isolated, bastions of [reactionary] politics. . . . However, we must admit that the people’s circles had a political significance then, and we need not deny that we too wish to make them a political factor.”

Although engaged in reviving these circles, the regime has lately become increasingly wary of their political temper. *Magyar Nemzet*, December 25, wrote that many of the reading and farmers’ circles are being given new buildings, but “sometimes they are given space in the houses of culture where their activities can be better controlled.” The regime primarily fears the influence of “kulaks” on these organizations. *Szabad Nep*, October 31, 1954, raised the cry: “When the farmers’ circle in Bekes was opened some fifteen kulaks entrenched themselves firmly. But one day



“In the language of rhyme, the industrial trainees of Sztalinvaros tell about mistakes and merits, about laggards and those excelling in their work.”

Beke es Szabadsag (Budapest), March 24, 1953

the will of the majority broke through: the farmers' circle belongs to us and not to those whose servants we once were. The kulaks cleared out, for they could not stand the accusing glances of the 150 working peasants and they had only two followers." Since the fall of Nagy, purging the farmers' circles of "kulaks" has continued with increased severity.

"Farmers' Circles Free of Communists!"

That the farmers' and people's circles in Hungary are indeed centers of non-Communism if not outright resistance is shown by the fact that some of the clubs have denied admission to or have expelled Communist Party members from their midst. This phenomenon of Communists being excluded from an organizational body which operates under State auspices is probably unique behind the Iron Curtain. The April 10, 1955, issue of *Szabad Nep* wrote: "The speculators sounded the slogan 'Farmers' Circles Free of Communists!' At Pakod, a member of the district council announced: 'The farmers' circle is a non-Party organization. Should the Council Chairman, Party Secretary or any one of the Party members criticize your work, you can simply show them the door.'" The paper added: "Yes, but showing them the door simply means opening the door to the kulaks, speculators and lurking reactionary elements."

Since March Central Committee resolutions, certain ideological taints have been uncovered within the work of the houses of culture themselves. *Eszakmagyarország* (Miskolc), March 30, 1955, charged:

"The false views that were lately prevalent in our economic ideology have also affected our houses of culture. Rightist, anti-Marxist views have cropped up and poisoned the development of Socialist culture. Under the motto: 'we are not concerned with politics, for us the important thing is entertainment,' persons of dubious political past have tried to smuggle in performances which offered a wide opportunity for spreading bourgeois ideology, in fact, served that end. This of course is wrong and dangerous. A performance which does not reflect the Party line serves bourgeois ideology. An example is the case of the

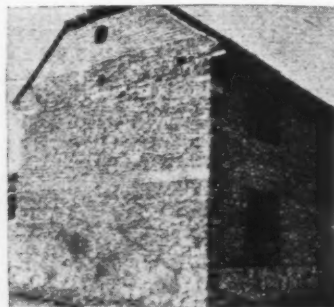
dramatic group of the house of culture in the Szerencs township. They flatly refused to perform critical-realist and Socialist-realist plays but instead fished out from the rubbish heap the hackneyed operettas of the old world. They charged the State heavily and distributed the receipts among themselves. This has had a bad effect on other groups in the country. . . . In several instances plays were given which presented life falsely and advocated bourgeois romanticism. . . . The miners' dramatic group in Jordanhaza 're-wrote' the play *Cadet Love*, giving it the title *Miners' Love*. All the 're-writing' amounted to was that the characters appeared in miners' suits instead of officers' uniforms."

That the houses of culture in the other Satellites are suffering from neglect is borne out by the press. The Sofia paper *Rabotnichesko Delo*, May 20, 1954, wrote of the house of culture in Zalapiza (Plovdiv): "The building is a beautiful palace. . . . One or two years ago, the house of culture had a dance group and a dramatic group which was very good. From the stage of the theater the singing of the young people could be heard and the library and reading rooms were active. Now things have changed. The dance group no longer performs, the dramatic group has disbanded, even the library and reading room are deserted. . . . The youth avoids the house of culture." The same paper described a similar case in its November 12, 1954 issue: "Ledenik village in Turnovo has a beautiful reading room auditorium. It is a pity that this hall is so neglected. The windows and doors are broken and covered over with boards. In the dressing room, chairs, tables and broken stage sets are scattered all over, the stage curtain is torn, the floor damaged, and the stove and most of the 200 chairs broken."

Zycie Warszawy, January 13, 1953, wrote that many of the houses of culture in Poland are allocated sports stadiums but "sometimes it happens, as in the case of a Warsaw house of culture, that grass has been sown in the stadium and in the place reserved for a new stadium rubble is piling up."

Pravda (Bratislava), March 2, 1954, claimed that the plan for a cultural club in every community and a house of culture in every district in Slovakia is being sabotaged

"Houses of Culture"



Beke es Szabadsag (Budapest), April 7, 1954

by some people's councils who "have made it easy for themselves" by voting away the need for such measures. Furthermore, there are instances in which the places designed for cultural centers are being used as storehouses and the community's cultural life remains "inert."

The cultural brigades have also met with resistance. The Romanian press has criticized trade unions for failing to support this "new and valuable medium of propaganda." One of the complaints is that many managers and foremen, "infuriated by the criticism" [of the brigade programs], disband the brigades, "persecute them, and have them transferred to places where they can no longer observe the shortcomings they satirize."

In Hungary, the use and misuse of buildings supposed to be houses of culture was scored. In many instances no real house of culture exists; some derelict building is called "the house of culture" so that the community can claim it has one. *Beke es Szabadsag*, April 7, 1954, published an illustrated article (see cut) in which the houses of culture were either uninhabitable buildings or existed only on

paper because they were being used for other purposes. In the village of Nemeshany a pile of ruins was designated as the house of culture, and in Somlojeno, fertilizer and sunflower seeds were stored in the building; in Kisberzsény an old mill with no door was marked as the house of culture. The article was titled: "The Township of Non-Existent Houses of Culture."

The house-of-culture program, although it unquestionably brings some benefits, has as its underlying purpose the tightening of the regime's grip on the activities and attention of the captive people. The people are aware of this; as the Hungarian press put it, many regard the house of culture as "a kind of State office." As such they regard it with some suspicion, particularly such manifestations as production agitation and the Sovietization of libraries and educational courses. Above all, they are bound to resist the encroachment of "Socialist mobilization" on what little leisure remains to them after the demands of work, and of the Party and mass organizations have been slaked.

Communist Curriculum

In an article published in the Czechoslovak teachers' newspaper, *Ucitelske Noviny* (November 24, 1954), the deputy directress of a grade school voiced apprehension over the amount of school time that her pupils had lost by doing State brigade work. She complained that in September her ninth grade pupils had had to put in 1,281 hours of work on State farms, while in October her school had devoted a total of 5,299 hours to brigade work. She had been assured that this would be the last such assignment, but on October 27 the chairman of the District National Committee "took the line of least resistance" and selected her school for another brigade assignment.

Current Developments

Area

Yugoslav-USSR Declaration

The post-Stalinist "normalization" of Soviet-Yugoslav relations entered a new phase with the journey of top Soviet leaders to Belgrade, the admission of Soviet responsibility for the break between the two countries, and the publication of a joint declaration. It is clear that Soviet leaders have gone to extraordinary lengths to repair the breach with Tito, though what they hope to accomplish and what the effects will be on the Satellite area and on European political alignment is much less clear.

From the moment of its arrival in Belgrade on May 26, the Soviet delegation (headed by Party leader Khrushchev and including Premier Bulganin, trade expert Mikoyan and *Pravda* editor Shepilov) did its clumsy best to placate Yugoslav resentment over the 1948 expulsion from the Cominform and the years of vicious vilification by Moscow and its Satellites. In his speech at the airport, Khrushchev carefully stressed the wartime cooperation between the USSR and Yugoslavia and the "best relations" established in the immediate postwar period. He "sincerely regretted" that "these good relations were subsequently broken," and placed all the blame on "the provocative role played . . . by the now unmasked enemies of the people, Beria, Abakumov and others . . . despicable agents of imperialism who made their way into the Party by deception."

In addition to this bland demonstration of the Communist art of rewriting history, Khrushchev made several references to the possibility of "parties which are guided by Marxist-Leninist teaching to reach full mutual understanding between themselves because they have a single aim, the struggle for the interest of the working people. . . ." This open attempt to identify the aims of the Yugoslav and the Soviet Parties can hardly have failed to anger Tito, who had hitherto predicated his regime on a Party that is independent of Moscow and moving in its own direction, and who, in light of his apparent desire to continue relations with the West, can hardly welcome such a public ideological embrace. It may have been a simple blunder on the part of Khrushchev, or a calculated attempt to compromise Tito's ideological independence.

On June 3, after a nine-day whirlwind of top-level meetings, State dinners and visits of inspection around the country, the text of the joint declaration was broadcast. It stated a number of "principles" from which the two governments proceeded in their talks: "the indivisibility of

peace on which alone collective security can rest; respect for sovereignty, independence, integrity and equality among States in mutual relations and relations with other countries . . . peaceful coexistence among nations regardless of ideological differences and differences in social systems.

. . . mutual respect and noninterference in internal affairs for any reason whatever . . . since questions of internal order, different social systems and different forms of the development of Socialism are the exclusive business of the peoples of the respective countries . . . international economic cooperation . . . extension of aid through the proper organs of the United Nations . . . to national economies and economically underdeveloped territories . . . removal of any forms of propaganda and misinformation and other measures which spread distrust . . . condemnation of aggression . . . recognition that the policy of military blocs increases world tension, undermines trust among nations and increases the danger of war."

Concerning their own mutual relations, the signatories declared that the "recent . . . great disturbances" have been "detrimental to both parties," and resolved "to undertake all the measures necessary to bring about a normal situation based on agreement."

No Satellite "Neutrality"

The declaration is in line with the apparent current Soviet drive for a "neutralized" belt of countries across Central Europe, presumably to include Yugoslavia and Austria. It is clear, however, that no possibility of "neutralization" for the Satellites is at present admissible, and the Satellite press has gone to great lengths to stress that the only alternative to the present Satellite disposition is "American imperialism":

"It is obvious that the imperialists, even when they speak of peace, rack their brains for a way to regain possession of the land for Counts and . . . the capitalists. They would like to re-establish the Hungary of three million beggars, of the market places where unemployed workers waited . . . , they would like to fetter the workers again . . . to destroy the achievements of our free country and Socialist building. . . ." (Radio Budapest, May 25).

"US Congressmen have discussed the problem of the restoration of old regimes in the People's Democracies. For the RPR this would mean the return of the Hohenzollerns, the turning of the RPR into the Kingdom of Romania, restitution to landholders of land assigned to farmers . . . the abolition of rights and liberties achieved by the people . . . the Ministry of the Interior in the hands of the Bern criminals . . . machine-guns . . . obscurantism . . . illiteracy. . . ." (Radio Bucharest, June 7)

It is very possible that Soviet strategy has more involved aims than the resumption of relations with a "neutralized" Yugoslavia. Various statements indicate that one of these is the breaking up of the alliance between Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey (the latter two both NATO countries). This may be attempted by luring Yugoslavia from the alliance and into the "collective security system" established by the Warsaw Treaty or by an offer to "enlarge" the Balkan alliance with Satellite participation.

Before—"The Executioner"



After . . .



To the left a caricature of Tito titled "The Executioner", *Urzica* (Bucharest), June 3, 1950. Above, photo of Tito and Khrushchev, *Izvestia* (Moscow), May 28, 1955.

"We have seen that Yugoslavia did not abandon her sovereignty, but maintained her independence from the imperialists."—Khrushchev at Sofia, from Radio Sofia, June 3, 1955.

New Problems for Soviets

The rapprochement with Tito poses a number of problems for the Satellites. In the first place, many of the more prominent regime leaders were in the forefront of attacks on Tito and his government as "fascists" and "tools of the American imperialists." Molotov was omitted from the delegation to Belgrade, doubtless because he had offended the Yugoslavs by his conduct of Soviet foreign affairs and by injudicious remarks as recently as February. It is possible that the Soviets will effect changes in the present Satellite leadership to placate Tito and remove causes of friction in Satellite-Yugoslav dealings. Many of the present rulers in the Satellites gained prominence following executions of leading "national Communist" figures accused of Titoism: Slansky in Czechoslovakia, Kostov in Bulgaria, Rajk in Hungary; each of these was linked to Tito and executed for that link. The current Soviet line that Titoist "sins" were actually a fabrication of enemies of the people such as Beria might place some of the Satellite leaders in a precarious position and their ultimate removal may have been demanded by Tito.

Furthermore, the Soviet admission, necessary to win accord with Tito, that "Socialism" may have various forms of development, and the indication that such previous heresies as "national Communism" may be permissible, must impose

certain strains on Soviet control of the Satellites. The old bogey of "national Communism," once laid in the blood of Slansky and Kostov, may well revive. It will not be easy to keep Party members particularly, let alone the people themselves, from looking with envy at a Yugoslavia that has successfully defied the USSR, has gone its own road at its own pace, and has now won from the USSR full recognition of its right to autonomy.

This problem of the Yugoslav example will perhaps be most serious in Hungary. There, a strenuous campaign is under way to curb and control "rightist deviation" that made headway under Nagy. Many of the "deviations" now being pilloried as unthinkable errors in a Communist State are similar to some of the reforms introduced by Tito in Yugoslavia. It is possible, of course, that the Communists will succeed in purging as grievous sins "rightist deviation" at home while acknowledging that similar and even more extreme measures are sound Communist doctrine abroad, but to do so will add tensions to an already tense situation.

It was probably the discussion of such problems of area-wide strategy that led the Khrushchev party to stop at Sofia and at Bucharest for conferences with Satellite leaders. In Bucharest, on June 5, Khrushchev and Bulganin conferred with Gheorghiu-Dej and Groza of Romania, Rakosi and Hegedus of Hungary and Novotny of Czechoslovakia.

In his speech in Sofia, Khrushchev said:

"Today we can say that the road toward the development of friendly relations between the USSR and the People's Democracies on the one side and Yugoslavia on the other has been opened. We have seen that Yugoslavia did not abandon her sovereignty but maintained her independence from the imperialists."

Khrushchev's reference, of course, was to the "American imperialists," but to the listening people of the Satellites such words can hardly fail to be a reminder that Yugoslavia did indeed break away from Soviet imperialism and, after a hard fight, won Soviet recognition of her rights. The Yugoslav example, with its theme of "non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries," will do nothing to make the reins of Soviet control lie more lightly.

Hungary

Party Difficulties

In hardening its line and turning away from the "right deviationism" of the Nagy period, the Hungarian regime is apparently having difficulty both in swinging Party members and in finding enough suitable new Party members for implementation of the line. (see pp. 3-15). It is attempting to counteract the first of these difficulties by calling for increased discipline and "democratic centralism," rather than the "collective leadership" previously stressed. *Szabad Nep* (Budapest), May 29, stated:

"Party discipline is one of the main sources of the Party's strength. It integrates the Party into a compact unit and intensifies its fighting ability by welding the activities of hundreds of thousands of Party members into one action which aims at achieving the same, single goal. . . . During the past two years we saw the damage caused by the loosening of Party discipline. Certain people wanted to interpret the Party's correct policy of remedying mistakes and consolidating and strengthening Party democracy as a signal for discarding discipline and disregarding Party resolutions. Those rightist views which strove to discredit democratic centralism and which disparaged the important role of Party members and Party work . . . only fostered these tendencies. This led to a weakening of Party life. . . . Our Party organizations must wage an untiring struggle, day after day, for the tightening of Party discipline. . . . Party organizations must be untiring in explaining the significance of Party discipline. . . . If, however, convincing arguments prove to be of no avail, Party punishment should be inflicted on the violators of Party discipline and organizational statutes. . . . Our enemies often deride Party discipline and strive to turn Party members against it. They repeat *ad nauseam* that Party discipline stifles independent thinking and debases man to the level of a screw in a large machine. This is a record that has been played too often. . . . Our discipline is not a blind discipline devoid of thinking, but is a voluntarily assumed and therefore conscious iron discipline which stimulates constructive ideas and deeds."

As examples of failures in Party discipline, the article stated that "Last year many Party members changed their

places of work without due reason and for their own sakes." It complained that "Many Communists neglected Party work, Party education was in a bad way, and Communists did not go to Party meetings." Many Party conferences in Budapest, it was stated, are attended by "only 50 or 60 percent of the Party membership."

The watchword now has become "democratic centralism." *Szabad Nep*, May 22, carried an article entitled "Let Us Strengthen Democratic Centralism Within the Party," stating: "Democratic centralism means that a voluntarily accepted iron discipline reigns within the Party; the minority is subordinated to the majority, the lower Party organizations to the higher. . . ." It excoriated neglect by Party officials in carrying out Party resolutions, and the demands of Party organizations that resolutions should be widely discussed before promulgation. This kind of thing, it stated, "is equivalent to the disorganization of leadership." The article also warned that the "right wing danger has not yet been eliminated, a fact that many Party members seem to forget."

Recruitment

For the successful implementation of these more stringent policies, the regime needs to reshape and expand its Party membership. The two sectors in which strengthening of Party cadres is most vital are in industry—to raise flagging production—and in the countryside—to help in the drive toward collectivization. *Szabad Nep*, April 24, called on Party organizations ". . . to be bolder in admitting members, particularly from the ranks of workers directly engaged in production, above all in industry and the more important factories. . . . In the villages, a greater number of leading workers, outstanding brigade leaders, tractor and combine operators, agronomists from the kolkhozes, State farms and MTS must be admitted to the Party." The article complained:

"During the last 18 months very few workers have been admitted to the Party. For this reason the proportion of workers in the Party, and particularly workers directly engaged in production, has dropped during these 18 months. . . . Only the proportion of Party members from the intelligentsia shows a more favorable development . . . many employees, artisans, small business men [are] on the candidates' list. . . . If we fill the Party ranks with these elements they may bring bourgeois uncertainty and wavering to the Party."

The Patriotic People's Front

The PPF, formed in October of 1954, was the New Course organization which most threatened to escape Party control. One of the points in the March resolution was the re-establishment of that control, and there have been a number of recent denunciations of "rightist" heresies in the PPF. On May 18 Radio Budapest announced a shuffle in PPF leadership: Imre Nagy resigned from his position as PPF Vice President, as well as from the organization itself; Ferenc Janosi resigned as General Secretary, and Ivan Boldizsar resigned his membership in the PPF National Council and his post as editor of *Magyar Nemzet*,

the PPF newspaper. Erno Mihalyfi, Deputy Minister of People's Culture, was appointed General Secretary and Gyorgy Parragi editor in chief of *Magyar Nemzet*.

In the May 22 *Magyar Nemzet*, Parragi stated that the scheduled PPF National Council meeting at the end of June will "discuss the tasks of the PPF in the spirit of the March resolution. . . ." The article continued:

"Millions of simple people—honest workers—did not realize the fact that certain leaders of the PPF deserted the policy which was outlined and supported without reservation by the Party and public opinion, and turned certain PPF committees into centers of plotting against the Party, the working class and the worker-peasant alliance. The March resolution of the Central Committee contained several criticisms, but it also showed that the PPF had lost nothing of its importance."

As a matter of fact, there has been a notable decrease in press and radio references to the PPF since the March resolution.

Resolution on Collectivization

A long and detailed Party Central Committee resolution, broadcast on Radio Budapest, June 9, summed up the current regime plan for increased agricultural collectivization through moderate means. After relating the regime's achievements in agriculture, the resolution added that "achievements would have been even greater but for the rightist views that made themselves felt within our Party and State machinery and hindered the healthy development of agriculture."

The resolution stated that "In conformity with the resolution of the Third Party Congress, the collectivization movement must be developed numerically through the voluntary enlistment of independent farmers . . . at a pace which would permit the Socialist sector of agriculture to gain predominance by the end of the Second Five Year Plan [end of 1960]." This is to be attained, "first of all through consolidation of the existing kolkhozes and by their exemplary farming; in addition to the constant strengthening of present collectives, new ones must be organized."

The "predominance" of collective farming—presumably meaning over 50 percent of the arable land collectivized—would necessitate a doubling of the present area in kolkhozes. If the number of collective farmers is also to be doubled, an influx into the kolkhozes of approximately 4,000 peasants a month is needed. This is about the rate reported so far this year (although there has been some falling off in recent weeks), and, compared with Stalinist practice, is not extremely intensive.

The resolution provides for commassation of land in the formation of new collectives, a practice that was suspended in June, 1953, at the inception of the New Course. The resolution is careful to urge that independent peasants receive land of equal value in the commassation exchanges, and that the process be done "on the basis of agreement with the independent peasants so that as few of them as possible are affected by it." "Kulaks," however, are to receive land in the most remote areas of the community, thus providing the regime with a useful and flexible

weapon. In general, however, the tone of the resolution is moderate, and the "voluntary" aspects of collectivization are stressed.

The resolution makes some changes in the statutes governing kolkhozes, both to make them more attractive and to make them more difficult to leave. It provides that a kolkhoz member may make application to leave only after a three-year membership (as was the case before the New Course). It also urges that kolkhozes distribute 10 to 20 percent of their profits to the membership. There was no previous lower limit on distributions; in practice it was generally well below 10 percent.

The resolution also calls for greater Party discipline in the countryside, for more State aid to collectives, for greater discipline among local councils and for complete fulfillment of agricultural delivery quotas.

Norms to be Raised

It is apparent from a number of sources that industrial work norms are to be raised, although there has been as yet no official announcement. *Szabad Nep* (Budapest), May 23 and *Nepszava* (Budapest), May 24 both discussed at length the problem of "obsolete" norms and the necessity to increase them in step with increased mechanization. *Szabad Nep* stated that:

" . . . norms are subject to constant change and development. First of all, the machines and the technical equipment of industry are changing. . . . Low norms slacken production competitions, the desire for innovation abates, and sooner or later productivity stops rising or even recedes, which ultimately leads to the lowering of the workers' standard of living and to abandoning the building of Socialism. Therefore the regular revision of norms is necessary, precisely for the sake of raising productivity and for [the building of Socialism] . . . in order to gain popularity certain factory managers have lowered norms. For new workers they set a slack norm at the start and illegally enrolled them in higher wage groups. . . . Perhaps nowhere else did right-wing deviation, liberalism and opportunism cause as much tangible damage as in the sphere of work, wages and norms. Wages rose rapidly while productivity in most branches of industry fell. As compared with 1953, productivity in the manufacturing industry fell in 1954 by over one percent while real wages and salaries increased 15 percent."

The article also called for an increase in the percentage of "technical" norms, based on the production of leading workers under ideal conditions, rather than "very primitive" norms based on experience or "statistical" norms based on average production. It complained that the undesirable estimated and statistical norms are "generally used," and that, in the engineering industry, less than 30 percent of the norms are technical, while the percentage is even lower in other industrial branches.

Nepszava, the organ of the Trade Unions, was even more explicit on the need for norm increases:

"The obsolete norms are not the stimulants they should be because they are based on antiquated technology. For this reason the obsolete norms hamper the increase of productivity and thereby the development of society. . . . Since

the last revision of norms, rapid progress in technology has been made in the metallurgical industry and particularly in the manufacturing industry. . . . In most plants the production conditions are far more favorable and modern than a few years ago. In the course of the past few years we have spent more than two billion *forints* on modernizing machinery, equipment and tools in the manufacturing industry, not to mention the many tens of thousands of innovations, rationalizations and excellent labor methods that have been introduced in our plants. In the meantime, norms and terms on which premiums are granted have not been adjusted to the new conditions and have become too lax."

The *Nepszava* article also castigated "concessionary, opportunistic views disparaging the role of industry," which "led to the relaxation of norms." It stated that this relaxation had been particularly apparent in the metallurgical industry, and gave a number of examples of plants where, because of the low norms, workers regularly fulfilled their norms by 150 percent or more, while the factory failed to fulfill its Plan. It also gave examples of inequalities in payment between various types of workers because of norm relaxation in certain skills.

The expected norm revision would be the first since June, 1952. It is possible, in light of the stress that has been placed on norm relaxation in certain specific fields such as the metallurgical and machine tool industries, that the revision will be for selected industries only, instead of a general upward revision as has previously been the case.

Although it is true that there has been an increase in mechanization and modernization in industry since 1952, the main purpose of the prospective norm revision is to attack the central problem of low productivity by forcing the workers to greater effort. The 1954 decrease in industrial productivity (despite the increase in mechanization) has badly upset regime plans. This was made clear by Radio Budapest, May 22, which stated that in 1955 industrial production must increase 5.7 percent, and productivity 3.9 percent, that costs must be reduced 3 percent and a 7.3 percent saving in raw materials effected. It added that although these figures do not constitute a sharp rise, "If one takes into account that, under the influence of rightist views and because of the unsatisfactory performance of their tasks on the part of the State economic and Party organs, industrial production made no headway in 1954, labor productivity decreased, prime costs increased and the quality of output deteriorated, then it is seen that the fulfillment of the 1955 people's economic Plan requires tremendous efforts, greater than ever, on the part of our working class and working people."

Trade Reorganization

Measures to reduce inefficiency and bureaucracy in State trade organs were announced in *Szabad Nep* (Budapest), May 14. The various sections of the Ministry of Domestic Trade have been combined with the appropriate wholesale trade centers, which were previously managed within a separate parallel bureaucratic structure. The new combined section, called the Commercial Directorate, will con-

trol the movement of goods from the factory through wholesale enterprises to retail outlets. In addition, trade bureaus of county councils are now merged with commercial sections of the State restaurant and catering enterprises. Certain wholesale and retail enterprises will be merged into larger units, and the general commercial accounting system will be simplified.

The announcement attacked the over-blown bureaucracy in the commercial structure:

"Bureaucracy in commercial life is very harmful . . . it hampers the supply of the population . . . and increases commercial expenses. . . . At the Baja restaurant and catering trade enterprise 15 employees have 21 bosses, and at the Szeged garment store 21 employees have 33 bosses."

Czechoslovakia

Trade Union Congress

The Third Trade Union Congress was held from May 19 to 21. In addition to the regular delegations, there were representatives from the USSR All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, and from the Communist-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions.

In addition to passing the new Statutes of the Trade Union Organization (see NBIC, June 1955, p. 53), the Congress heard a number of cautionary speeches. The major address was given by Frantisek Zupka, formerly Acting Chairman of the Trade Union Council, who was chosen Chairman of the newly elected Council. He stated that "heavy industry is the main link of our Socialist economy," necessary for the "development of other industrial sectors and agriculture . . . and . . . our country's defense potential." He repeated the ritual call for "Plan fulfillment, the use of hidden production reserves, constant care for the reduction of costs, constant improvement of quality, an increase of labor productivity." "Socialist competition" was stressed as an essential means to all these goals. The importance of increasing agricultural production to eliminate "the existing disproportion between industry and agriculture, which is still lagging," was emphasized, and Zupka pointed out the duty of union members in rural areas to press for agricultural collectivization. Zupka took a firm stand against industrial accidents.

After these routine and prosaic matters, Zupka launched a violent attack on remnants of "social democratism" and "anarcho-syndicalism" in the trade union membership. He stated that:

"It must be emphasized that trade union organizations do not fully recognize the importance of their educational tasks . . . the damaging consequences of social democratism and anarcho-syndicalist ideologies and their concrete expressions. Social democratism is opposed to democratic centralism. This shows itself mostly in a lack of respect for the directives of higher bodies. Often narrow and sectional interests of individual unions, as well as local patriotic interests, are pursued without regard to the requirements of the community. . . . Then demands are often made for wage increases by individual groups without regard to whether they are justified. . . . Claims that stomachs

are the same are made to support tendencies for equal rewards for work. . . . Social democratic views also find their expression in . . . infringement of industrial discipline and in an incorrect attitude toward Socialist property.

"No effective struggle is being waged in the trade unions against anarcho-sindicalist views either. These views find their expression in a lack of respect for the leading role of the Communist Party . . . in the National Front, a disrespect of State and economic organs, and sometimes in direct acts against these. Both these ideological aberrations . . . are dangerous expressions of bourgeois ideology, harmful to the working class."

Such statements—the emphasis on Party leadership in the Front, the advocacy of "democratic centralism," the attack on "bourgeois views,"—parallel the current Hungarian agitation against "rightist deviations." This apparent hardening of the line in Czechoslovakia is less stringent than in Hungary, where the runaway characteristics of the New Course went much further in endangering Party control.

Tesla Absent

The Congress was marked by the continued absence of Josef Tesla and the return of Zupka to trade union leadership after three years. Zupka held this post from 1950, when he stepped into Zapotocky's shoes, until July 1952, when he was relieved in the purge following the arrest of Slansky. He was demoted to Chairman of the Slovak Trade Union Council. His successor was Gustav Kliment who died in 1953. Josef Tesla, then a Party Central Committee Secretary, was detailed to take over the post during Kliment's sick leave. He held the leadership of the Trade Union Organization through the whole first period of the New Course, but was replaced by Zupka in December, 1954. He was absent and unmentioned at the Slovak Trade Union Congress in March, and has recently neither been heard of nor referred to.

New Awards

A number of new orders and awards for workers have been created, according to *Rude Pravo* (Prague), May 26. These include The Order of the Red Banner of Labor (awarded for "extraordinary merit gained through life-long achievement, long-term, determined, devoted and exemplary work in decisive sectors of economic, cultural or scientific building of Socialism, inspired by loyalty to the profession"); The Order of the Red Star of Work ("outstanding merit"); and two medals, For Work Loyalty, and For Work Dedication.

The proliferation of such awards for workers is part of the current campaign to improve work methods, raise productivity and quality, and lower costs and waste. Miners are to be the first recipients of the new awards, in line with the regime's particular concern for failings in that field.

Romania

1955 Budget

The 1955 budget was presented to the National Assembly on May 31 by Finance Minister Dumitru Petrescu. It pro-



Caption: "Comrades, I cannot possibly attend the People's Russian Courses, since I'd have no time left for reading the Soviet press." (Soviet paper is upside down).

Dikobraz (Prague), November 25, 1954

vides for a total income of approximately 44.4 billion lei, expenditures of 43 billion lei. Petrescu also gave provisional results of the 1954 budget for these items (planned figures in parenthesis): income, 41.4 billion (40); expenditures, 38.3 billion (39).

The 1955 budget provides for expenditures of 24.4 billion lei "for financing the national economy." This is .4 billion higher than the planned (not the actual) 1954 figure, but only 56.6 percent of the total expenditures as opposed to 61.5 percent (planned) in 1954. In addition, supplementary financing from enterprises' "own" resources is reduced to 7.5 billion lei from the 1954 (planned) figure of 9.1 billion. Thus total financing will decline both absolutely (1.2 billion lei) and relatively.

The budgeted figure for new investments is 9.1 billion lei, 21 percent of total expenditures. This is less than last year, when 10.5 billion lei, 27 percent of total expenditures, were budgeted for investments. Total investments will probably also decline, since the major extra-budgetary investment sources are enterprises' "own" funds, which are markedly reduced this year, as indicated above.

It is possible, however, that this apparent general reduction of total financing and investments is deceptive. A number of references in the budget speech to large percentage increases "based on possible price differences," indicate that reduced prices for State purchases (without turnover tax, a price structure different from that of consumer prices) may give the reduced absolute budget figures more purchasing power than would appear.

The largest increase in budget components is in agricultural expenditures: 4.4 billion lei, an increase of .9 billion, or 25.7 percent, over 1954. In addition, it was stated that for certain purposes, mostly new investments such as tractors and agricultural machinery, and 20 new MTS, but also for such apparently non-investment purposes as "development of State farms . . . and other agricultural and forestry work," an increase in allocations of 40 percent over 1954 is to be made, "based on possible price differences." No figure on agricultural investments alone is apparently available.

Investments in the light, food and local industries will be 15.3 percent higher than last year, "taking into account the difference . . . in price levels."

Expenditures for State administration will be 1.335 billion lei, 3.1 percent of total expenditures. This is 20 million lei less than last year, "in comparable prices." Expenditures for "defense" will be 4.477 billion lei, a slightly higher percentage of the total than last year.

Bulgaria

Decentralization Decree

A decree, announced on Radio Sofia, May 20, considerably reduces the amount of centralized planning and control in agriculture. The decree states that:

"It has been noted that the methods of agricultural planning previously used, characterized by great centralization and numerous provisions, contain major shortcomings. Experience shows that in order to provide the State with all kinds of agricultural products it is not necessary to assign every farm a sowing plan for all crops nor to plan all kinds of cattle, because this inhibits the development of initiative for improved farm management by producers. Detailed planning of agriculture from the center in numerous cases also fails to take entirely into account local climatic, soil and economic conditions."

Under the new system "the State Plan for the development of agriculture will include only the amounts of agricultural products for compulsory State deliveries, payment in kind of MTS, contract and fixed-price purchasing, average crop yields, average animal productivity, perennial plants and the overall amount of agricultural work to be accomplished by the MTS." Collective farms and independent farmers will henceforth determine for themselves the kinds and amounts of crops to be sown, the number of livestock and the amount of work of various types to be done by the MTS, "on the basis of unconditional fulfillment of their Plan notification for the delivery of agricultural products to the State, as well as on the needs of kolkhozes and their farmers."

The decree provides for close supervision by various Ministries, including Agriculture and Finance, over the plans of the individual kolkhozes which must be submitted

to local councils by September 10 for the following year. The individual plans are then coordinated for the various administrative levels until they reach Ministerial review.

The decentralization move is apparently part of the current attempt very markedly to increase agricultural production. It is hoped that a decrease in stultifying bureaucratic controls and the possibility for farmers to grow those crops most salable on the free market (over and above their delivery obligations) will work to that end.

Forbidden Cities

An Ordinance of the Council of Ministers has forbidden any new residents in the five largest cities, according to *Isvestia na Presidiuma* (Sofia), March 18. "Because of the serious housing shortage and other problems existing in the cities of Sofia, Plovdiv, Stalin, Burgas and Russe, no new residents will be admitted in these cities for the time being," it stated.

There are certain exceptions to the new law. "Old or chronically-ill persons" will be permitted to move in with close relatives in these cities if they cannot be cared for in their own place of residence. Persons who are appointed to Party or State posts in these cities, or who have lost their residence in these cities through previous transfer elsewhere are excluded from the regulation.

Albania

Ministerial Changes

Two decrees concerning organization and personnel were announced by Radio Tirana, June 6. One of these divides the former Ministry of Construction and Communications into two separate Ministries. The second makes several changes in regime personnel, including: Josif Pashko, former Minister of Construction and Communications, appointed Minister of Construction; Tonin Jakova appointed Minister of Communications; Hysni Kapo released as Minister of Agriculture but remaining First Deputy Premier; Maqo Como, appointed Minister of Agriculture; Spiro Koleka appointed Deputy Premier, remaining Chairman of the State Planning Commission.

Recent and Related

Nine Soviet Portraits, by Raymond A. Bauer (*Wiley & Sons: \$3.95*). As an alternative to the usual statistical surveys of political beliefs, standards of living, etc., Mr. Bauer, with the assistance of Edward Wasiolek, has developed nine fictionalized biographies from available statistics and interviews with Soviet emigres. He has selected nine representative groups, from students to MVD agents, evolved plots to illustrate selected sociological points, and attempted to indicate the "pattern of incentives and restraints" peculiar to each occupation within the Soviet Union. Appendix, glossary, cartoons.

The Byelorussian Theater and Drama, by Vladimir Seduro (*Research Program on the U.S.S.R.: \$6.00*). In this first complete English survey of Byelorussian theater, Mr. Seduro has drawn together all available source material into a systematic history of this area's theatrical development from earliest examples of folk drama through the present day. The events of the last thirty years have been particularly emphasized in order to show the atrophy of national minorities' folk art due to "Socialist realism" and iron Party control, the same factors which reduced the great experimental theater of Stanislavsky and his contemporaries to another rigidly supervised outlet for Soviet propaganda. Photographs, bibliography and indices.

Ukrainian Communism and Soviet Russian Policy toward the Ukraine — An Annotated Bibliography 1917-1953, by Jurij Lawrynenko (*Research Program on the U.S.S.R.: \$4.75*). Comparatively little research has been done on the question of Ukrainian Communism, both because of the scarcity of primary source material and the complexity of the problem. In an attempt to eliminate this historical gap the author has compiled an annotated bibliography of works dealing with the Ukrainian Communist Party and Soviet Russian policy toward the Ukraine, including Lenin's works on the nationalities question. A brief history of the Ukrainian Communist Party is included in the introduction. Tables and Indices.

Ukrainian Nationalism, 1939-1945, by John A. Armstrong (*Columbia: \$5.00*). A well-documented and cautious study

of the development of Ukrainian nationalism with special emphasis on the war years. Mr. Armstrong studies the political and cultural history of the area to determine the sources of its particularly strong nationalism and analyzes the effects of the Nazi occupation. He concludes that there has been an unspectacular, but nonetheless significant, increase of territorial patriotism in the Ukraine under the Communist regime as a result of "decades of overcentralized oppression directed from Moscow." Maps, appendix, bibliography and index.

Czartoryski and European Unity 1770-1861, by M. Kukiel (*Princeton: \$6.00*). Prince Adam Czartoryski was one of the greatest Polish nationalists and at the same time one of the earliest proponents of "a supranational structure for collective security" in Europe. In 1804 he proposed an alliance between Great Britain and Russia which was to have safeguarded Europe from the advances of Napoleon through assurances of governments "based on local requirements and on the wishes of the people," in a document which is a remarkable precursor of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points. This biography traces his turbulent career, which included founding the Kingdom of Poland. Photographs, maps, bibliography and index.

History of Modern Slovakia, by Jozef Lettrich (*Praeger: \$5.00*). The author, President of the Slovak National Council from 1945 to 1948, has written a history whose major purpose is to explain the creation and existence of the Slovak State "by presenting documentary evidence" and keeping interpretation "to a minimum." He makes a sharp distinction between Slovak desire for autonomy and the separatist movement, which, he claims, was inspired by the National Socialists and did not represent "the vast majority" of the Slovak people. The latter part of the book deals in detail with the immediate post-war period and the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia and ends with a discussion of the various contemporary exile groups. In concluding, Mr. Lettrich makes a plea for unity: "The future of the Slovaks is at the side of the Czechs in Czechoslovakia. That is the

meaning and the message of Slovakia's past." Photographs, documents, bibliography and index.

The Ninety and Nine, by Imre Kovacs (*Funk and Wagnalls: \$3.75*). In this profound and moving novel Mr. Kovacs, former leader in the Hungarian underground and member of the Hungarian Parliament, probes the minds and souls of two men; a Jesuit priest and the Number Two man in the Hungarian Communist Party. Cellmates in a Communist jail, they come to know and respect each other, and become progressively more involved in their personal ideological struggle. Their passionate and brilliant debates not only illuminate the characters of two fascinating and complex personalities, but probe the most pressing problems of our times.

Declaration of Freedom, by Elton Trueblood (*Harper: \$1.50*). Believing that "mere unity is not unconditionally good," and that "mutual tolerance is little more than meaningless sentimentality when there are clear conflicts in ultimate aims," Dr. Trueblood, Religious Advisor for the Voice of America, makes a plea for a revaluation of the principles by which we live, but of which we are often only vaguely aware. Outlining the six positive freedoms upon which he believes the Western Democracies to be based, he suggests that only through an active re-dedication to these fundamental values can we achieve sufficient dynamism and "revolutionary conviction" to counter the appeal of Communism.

The Waif, by Nicholas Voinov (*Pantheon: \$3.95*). The astonishing autobiography of a Soviet "orphan" who, when his father was arrested by the NKVD, was sent at the age of six to a children's home as a ward of the State. His graphic account of the life of such "displaced children" and their evolution into thieves and outcasts is told with deep feeling and reveals an unforgettable picture of Soviet methods and indifference. The last chapters describe the exhaustion and disillusion of the Russian troops on the Eastern Front, their capture by Nazi troops, and finally, the period of terror in Paris when forced repatriation rendered every hour a nightmare and all former German prisoners were regarded as traitors by the MVD.



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